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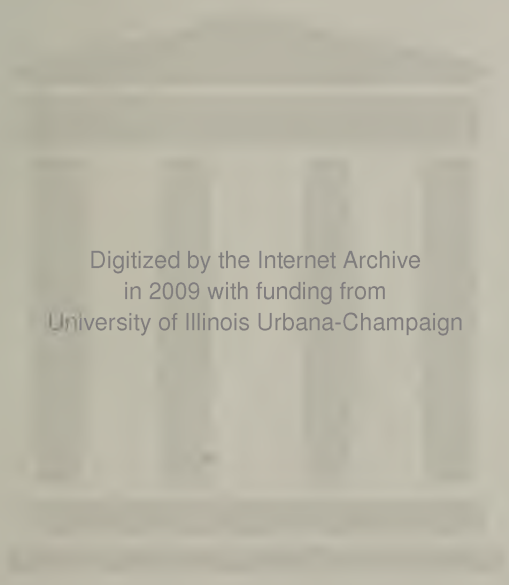
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LADY OF THE LAM

THE COQUETTE,

AND OTHER

TALES AND SKETCHES,

IN PROSE AND VERSE.

BY

THE HON. MRS. NORTON.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE COQUETTE.

THE COQUETTE.

CHAPTER I.

THE ball was truly splendid: so was the supper. Three new beauties “came out” that night; fourteen gentlemen, distinguished in the fashionable world, for various causes, fell in love with these “blossoms of the London spring,” as the newspapers call them; and Bessie Ashton’s marriage with Lord

Glenallan was formally declared by her aunt, Lady Ashton, as fixed for the ensuing evening.

One by one the lingering guests departed; the chandeliers gave a fainter light as the gradual day-dawn overpowered them; and the tired servants seemed only waiting finally to extinguish the lamps, till the departure of two figures should leave the room silent and deserted. They waited however in vain. Mute and motionless as a statute, Bessie Ashton remained gazing, from the open window, on the empty park, and ever and anon the cool breeze of the morning lifted her glossy black hair from a cheek, whose haggard weariness and unsmiling expression, ill assorted with the situation of Glenallan's envied bride.

Opposite, leaning against a marble table which supported one of the magnificent mirrors

in the apartment, and gazing steadfastly on her averted figure, stood a young man of about six and twenty. His mouth was coarse—his eye harsh—yet his countenance was handsome.

Miss Ashton turned from the window with a slight shudder, as if the wind had chilled her ;
“ Well, George ? ” said she, listlessly.

“ Well, Bessie. And so you have sold yourself for a coronet ! ”

“ Ah ! George, do not begin in that harsh way ; you know I cannot bear it.—It is long since I spoke familiarly with any one, and I was so glad to see you back again.”

As she spoke the last words she clasped his hand in one of hers, and laying the other lightly and tremblingly on his shoulder, looked up in his face with a nervous and painful smile. Her companion did not shake her off, but he

shrunk from that caressing hand, and ceased to lean against the marble slab.

“ I do not wish to speak harshly to you, Bessie: on the contrary, I believe you will find me more kindly disposed to you, than many who are smoother spoken: but I cannot, and will not, conceal from you, that your conduct towards my friend, Claude Forester, has for ever destroyed my esteem for your character. It is impossible I should not feel this—and particularly at a time when I know him to be ill and heart-broken.”

“ *I* did not forsake *him*—he chose to distrust—to forget me,” said Bessie, while she struggled in vain to choke back the tears that rose to her eyes.

“ And why? *why* did he distrust and forsake you? because that spirit of coquetry,

which is the curse of your existence, prompted you to encourage every one around you—to traffic for compliments—to barter looks for words, and words for feelings—and to make him miserable for the gratification of your vanity. Yet you might, if you had tried, have won him back again: you *might* even now.”

“Win him back again!” exclaimed Miss Ashton passionately, “I have no need to make so vast a struggle to be loved; there are many who are thought Claude Forester’s superiors, who like me in spite of those faults you and your friend are so quick in observing; and pray on what occasions have I played the coquette, my wise cousin?”

“Bessie, Bessie, you need not be bitter with *me*; for the time is gone by when you could

provoke or sadden me. Have you forgotten young Mildmay, to whom you were forced to apologise for having led him to believe you would accept him? Have you forgotten Lawrence Gordon and his laboured gifts, which you returned when weary of the giver? Have you forgotten Lord Courtown and his flowers? Mr. Montague and his blood-hounds, which you caressed for the sake of making a *tableau*? Have you forgotten that at one time you even thought it worth your while——” a peculiar and confused expression passed over his countenance;—he stammered and paused.

Miss Ashton raised her eyes, and a short quick smile of triumph lit every feature of her expressive face, as she gazed on his. “I do believe you are jealous,” exclaimed she, “it is ill receiving advice from a *lover*, Mr Ashton.”

“ I am not your lover, Bessie ; God forbid that my happiness should depend on you—and if I *were* your admirer, is the admiration which results solely from the power of personal attraction—without esteem, without respect—is it indeed worth that smile ? Your beauty no one can be insensible to ; but your heart ! oh, very cold and selfish must that heart be, which could prize *any* triumph at a moment like this, when you have made the misery of one man, and are about, in all human probability, to destroy the happiness of another. Beware, Bessie, beware ! the day shall come when the triumph of coquetry shall have no power to comfort your agony. Good night.”

He turned and left the room. Mechanically, Miss Ashton followed ; and mechanically she

sought her own room and flung herself into a chair.

George Ashton's words rung in her ear; her heart beat violently; the choking which precedes weeping rose in her throat. Grief, pride, resentment, and mortification strove for mastery in her mind, and the triumphant beauty gave way to an hysterical burst of tears.

Her passionate sobbing awoke the weary attendant, who had been sitting up for her. "Dear Miss," said she, "don't fret so; we must all leave our homes some time or another, and I am sure Lord Glenallan——"

"Don't talk to me, Benson—I have no home—I have no one to grieve for. Home! is it like home-friends to give a ball on my depar-

ture, as if it were a thing to rejoice at? Where is the quiet evening my mother used to describe long ago, which was to precede my wedding-day—where the sweet counsel from her lips which was to make the memory of that evening holy for evermore—where the quiet and the peace which should bless my heart? They have made me what I am—they have made me what I am.”

“La, Miss,” said the astonished maid, “I am sure you ought to be happy; and as to your poor mamma, it is in nature that parents should die before their children, and she was a very delicate lady always. So do, Miss,” continued she, “dry your beautiful eyes, or they’ll be as red as ferrets, and your voice is quite hoarse with crying; you will not be fit to be seen to-morrow.”

Nothing calms one like the consciousness of not being sympathised with : Bessie Ashton ceased to weep, and began to undress, after which she dismissed her maid, and burying her head in her hands, forgot all but the irrevocable past.

“ Past four ! a fine morning.” Bessie started, and raised her heavy eyes to the window—the monotonous words were repeated. She looked wistfully at the bed ; but no—she felt she *could* not sleep. Her head sank again on her hand ; vague feelings of wretchedness and self-reproach, weighed on her soul, and too weary even to weep, she remained listlessly dreaming, till a sudden beam of the morning sunshine lit on the ornaments she had worn the night before, and startled her into consciousness. Her clasped hands dropped on

her knee as she gazed on the sweet sky which heralded in her wedding-day.

The sun rose higher and brighter—the heavens grew bluer—the indistinct and rarely heard chirping of the earlier birds changed to a confused twittering, varied by loud cheerful notes, and the clear carol of the blackbird and thrush; the fresh wind blew on her weary aching brow, as if seeking to soothe her misery; and Bessie Ashton sank on her knees and stretching out her arms to Heaven, murmured some passionate invocation, of which the only audible words were “Claude, dear Claude!—Oh, God forgive me and help me! *that* love is sinful now.”

Few would have recognised the pale and weeping form which knelt in earnest agony *then*, in the bride of the evening. Wedded

by special licence to an Earl: covered with pearls and blonde: flushed with triumph and excitement: the Countess of Glenallan bent and imprinted a light cold kiss on the forehead of her beautiful bridesmaids; bowed and smiled to the congratulating beings who pressed round her; received the stiff and self-complacent parting speech of her aunt, Lady Ashton; and descended the magnificent staircase with her happy bridegroom.

One adieu alone disturbed her. George Ashton stood at the hall-door, and, as she passed, he took her hand and murmured “God bless you, Bessie!”

Involuntarily she wrung the hand he held; involuntarily she returned the blessing; old memories crowded to her heart:—tears gathered in her eyes:—with a burst of weeping

she sank back in the carriage, and when Lord Glenallan whispered caressingly, " Surely, my own, you have left nothing there for which my love cannot repay you,"—she drew her hand from his with a cold shudder; and a confused wish that she had never been born, or never lived to be married, (especially to the man to whom she had just sworn love and duty,) was the uppermost feeling in Bessie's heart, as the horses whirled her away to her new home.

Time past; Bessie Ashton again appeared on the theatre of the gay world, as an admired bride. The restless love of conquest which embittered her girlhood, still remained—or rather (inasmuch as our feelings do not become more simple as we mix with society,) increased and grew upon her day by day.

The positive necessity of sometimes concealing what we do feel; the policy of affecting what we do not; the defiance produced by the consciousness of being disliked without a cause, and abused as a topic for conversation; the contempt excited by the cringing servility of those who flatter for services to be performed, and follow for notice to be obtained; the repeated wreck of hopes that seemed reasonable; the betrayal of confidence which appeared natural; the rivalry, disappointment, mortification, and feverish struggling, which beset us in the whirlpool of life, and carry us round whether we will or not,—these are causes which the noblest and the purest natures have difficulty in resisting, and which had their full effect on a mind like Bessie's, naturally vain and eager, and warped by circumstances to something worse.

From her mother's home, where poverty and a broken heart had followed an imprudent marriage, Miss Ashton had been transported to add, by her transcendent beauty, one other feature of attraction to the gayest house in London.

Not quite a woman, yet but half a child,

she was at that age when impressions are easiest made—and, when made, most durable.

Among her rich relations the lessons taught by the pale lips of her departed parent were forgotten: the weeds which that parent would have rooted from her mind, grew up and choked her better feelings; and Bessie, the once simple and contented Bessie, who had been taught to thank God for the blessing of a humble home, and the common comforts of

life, struggled for wealth and rank that should place her on a par with her new associates, and shrank from the idea of bestowing her hand on any man who could not give her in return—diamonds and an Opera-box.

CHAPTER II.

DURING the seclusion of an English honeymoon, Bessie had believed that (Claude Forester apart) she could love Glenallan better than any one. He was intelligent, kind, graceful, and noble. He was an Earl, he was popular with women, and respected by men. He had made two very creditable speeches in the House, and *might* make more.

He rode inimitably well. He had shown more taste in laying out the grounds about Glenallan, than Nash did in the Regent's Park.

In short, there was no reason why she could *not* love Glenallan ;—except that it would be so exceedingly ridiculous to fall in love with one's husband ; it would look as if nobody else thought it worth his while to pay her any attention ; Glenallan himself would think it so ridiculous, for Glenallan had none of Claude Forester's romance, and was quite accustomed to the ways of fashionable couples, and contented to pursue the same path.—Then Lady Ashton—*how* Lady Ashton would laugh ! and it really would be laughable, after all.

So Lady Glenallan's first *coup d'essai*, after her marriage, was to encourage the violent admiration evinced for her by her Lord's cousin,

Fitzroy Glenallan, who was twice as intelligent, twenty times as graceful, won all the plates at Ascot, Epsom, and Doncaster; was the idol of the women—and as to the men—pshaw! the men were jealous of him.

Now it is so happened, that one of the inimitable Fitzroy's peculiarities was, that he never could be in love with the same woman for more than three months at a time.

Upon this failing, therefore, the young Countess undertook to lecture him, and succeeded so well, that he suddenly told her one morning, when she was gathering a geranium in her beautiful conservatory in Park Lane, that if there ever existed a being he could worship for ever, it was herself.

Lady Glenallan let fall the flower she had gathered. She blushed a deep crimson. She

felt—that she was a married woman, and ought to be excessively shocked—she thought of forbidding him the house, but then it would be so awkward to make a quarrel between Glenallan and his cousin; so she only forbid him ever to mention the subject again: and to prove that she was in earnest in her wish to discourage his attentions, she gave two hours every morning, and a perpetual ticket to her opera-box, to young Lord Linton, who knew nobody in town, poor fellow, was only just two-and-twenty, and most touchingly attached to a pale pretty little sister of his, with whom he rode, walked, and talked unceasingly, and who, he assured Lady Glenallan, was the last of seven; that eating worm, consumption, being the inheritance of his family.

Fitzroy Glenallan was not, however, a man

to be slighted with impunity—he ceased to be Lady Glenallan's *lover*, but oh! how infinitely more irksome and troublesome did he contrive to make the attentions of Lady Glenallan's *friend*.

What unasked-for advice did he not pour into her ear!—what gentle hints and laughing allusions did he not bestow on her husband! what an unwearied watch did he not keep over the very curl of her lip, and the lifting of her eye-lash, when her smiles or her glance were directed to her new favourite.—A thousand times in a fit of irritation did she determine on freeing herself from the tyranny of the self-erected monitor; and a thousand times did she shrink from the attempt, under the bitter consciousness that her own folly had in some measure placed her in his power.—He might

incense Lord Glenallan, who was gradually becoming, not openly jealous—no, he was too fashionable a husband for that—but coldly displeased, and distant at times, and sneeringly reproachful at others. He might ridicule her to his companions; he might—in short she felt, without exactly knowing why, that it would be better to keep well with the person whose admiration had once been so grateful to her.

Meanwhile, young Linton gradually became absorbed by his passion for his beautiful protectress :—that a being so gifted, so worshipped, so divine, should devote her time, her talents, her affection, to one as unknown and insignificant as himself, was as extraordinary as it was intoxicating.

His mornings were spent in her boudoir—his afternoons in riding by her side—his evenings

in wandering through the crowded assembly, restless, fevered, and dissatisfied, till *her* arm was linked in his, and then—all beyond was a blank—a void—a nullity that could scarce be deemed existence.

His little fair consumptive sister was almost forgotten; or, when remembered, the sudden pang of having neglected her would strike him, and he would hurry her here and there and everywhere, in search of amusement, and load her table with new books, and hothouse flowers; and kiss away the tears that trembled in her eyes; and murmur, between those light kisses, how willingly he would lay down his life to save her one hour's vexation; and wonder she still looked fatigued and still seemed unhappy.

But by degrees these fits of kindness grew more rare—the delirium which steeped his

senses shut out all objects but one. Day after day—day after day—Lucy Linton sat alone in the dark, hot drawing-room, in South Audley-street, and with a weakness, which was more of the body than the mind, wept and prophesied to herself that she should die very soon; while her brother persuaded himself that she was too ill—too tired to go out—too anything—rather than she should be in the way.

It is true, Lady Glenallan could not be aware of all these solitary musings; but it is equally true that she was jealous of Linton's love, even for his sister; and in the early days of their acquaintance, when Lucy used sometimes to accompany them to the opera, exacted the most undivided attention to her fair self.

Occasionally, indeed, when some charitable dowager had taken Lucy to a ball or party, and

that little, pale, wistful face passed Lady Glenallan in the crowd, and gave one lingering look of fondness at the brother who was her natural protector, the heart of the admired Countess would smite her, and her arm would shrink from her companion, as she reflected that she did not even return the love she had taken so much pains to secure to herself; but for the most part she forgot all but her own interests or amusements.

At length a new actor appeared in the scenes we have described. Claude Forester returned to England! Fitzroy Glenallan's eye rested on Bessie's face, when some careless tongue communicated the news to her. For one moment he looked round, as if to assure himself there was no other obvious cause for the emotion which crimsoned the brow, cheek, and bosom,

of the being before him. Lady Glenallan lifted her conscious eyes to his, and turned deadly pale—he looked at her a moment more—bit his lip till the blood started, and moved away.

A moment's hesitation and she followed with a light quick step into the adjoining room. "Fitzroy," gasped she, as she laid her hand on his arm, "you know I knew him before I was married."

"I did *not* know it," replied he, coldly, "neither I believe does Glenallan."

For a moment Bessie shrank angrily from the insinuation, which the tone rather than the words implied. She dreaded she scarcely knew what, from the manner of her companion; and the consciousness that even that rapid moment, which had scarce allowed time for the crimson blood to rise and subside in

her cheek, had sufficed to flash the thought through her mind of how and where and when Claude would meet her; and what would be the result of such a meeting, bewildered her and increased her agitation, as, with a nervous laugh she said, "You will not jest before *him* about it—will you?"

"It was the first time she had so directly appealed to him—so directly endeavoured to propitiate him. A conscious and bitter smile of triumph played on his lip and lurked in his eye. "You may depend on my never mentioning *the past*," said he; "but tell me—" what he desired to know was left unasked, for at that moment Claude Forester himself walked through the room.

He saw Lady Glenallan—paused—hesitated for a few seconds—crossed the room and stood

beside her. A few words he spoke, but what they were Bessie did not hear, though they were spoken in a clear firm tone. To her imagination it seemed as if there was contempt and reproof even in the sound of his voice—she murmured something inarticulate in return, and when she ventured to lift her eyes, Fitzroy Glenallan alone stood before her.

Oppressed with the suddenness of the interview—overcome by previous agitation—and stung to the heart, Bessie Glenallan burst into tears.

Fitzroy had taken her hand, and was endeavouring to soothe her, when Lord Glenallan and George Ashton entered at the same moment. “Shall I call the carriage, Lady Glenallan? Are you ill?” asked the former, as he glanced with a surprised and discontented air from one to the other.

“If you please,” murmured Bessie, and he went, followed by his cousin.

Not a word was spoken by the pair who remained; but once, when Lady Glenallan looked up, she caught George Ashton’s eyes fixed on her with earnest pity: how different from Fitzroy’s smile! thought she, and, as she stepped into the carriage, she asked him to call the next day and see her.

The morrow came, and with it came George Ashton. Dispirited and weary, Lady Glenallan complained of Claude Forester’s coldness—of Fitzroy Glenallan’s friendship—of Lord Linton’s attentions—of her husband’s inattention—of Lucy Linton’s health—of the world’s ill-nature—of everything, and everybody, including the person she addressed, and, having exhausted herself with passionate complaining, sank back to wait his answer.

“Bessie,” said he, at length, “I have known you from childhood, and (I may say so *now* that all is over) I have loved you as well or better than any of your admirers; it is not, therefore, a harsh view of your character that prompts me to give the warning I beseech of you to hear patiently. You are listless and weary of the life you are leading, and mortified at Claude Forester’s neglect; but, gracious Heaven! what is it you wish? or when will the struggle for pernicious excitement cease in your mind, and leave you free to exert your reason? Suppose Claude Forester to have returned with the same deep, devoted love for you which filled his heart when he left England, and fled from a fascination which he was unable to resist. Suppose him to have urged that passion with all the vehemence of which his nature is capable—would you, indeed, as

Lord Glenallan's wife, listen to the man for whom you would not sacrifice your vanity when both were free? or is there so much of the heartlessness of coquetry about you, that you would rather *he* were miserable, than that you should not appear irresistible? Do you, Bessie, wish Claude were again your lover?"

"No," sobbed Lady Glenallan; "but I wish him not to think ill of me."

"And if you could prove that you had no fault towards him, would it not seem hard that he had ever left you? Would not explanations lead to regrets, and regrets to ——? Bessie, struggle against this strange infatuation—this envious thirst for power over the hearts of men. Already you are entangled—already you shrink from the tyranny of Fitzroy Glenallan, and dread the approaches of the cruelly de-

ceived Linton—already you have begun to alienate the affections of a kind and generous heart for the miserable shadows of worldly admiration. Oh! where is the pleasure—where the triumph—of conquests such as yours? What avails it to your comfort at home, or your respectability abroad, that you are satisfied to believe yourself virtuous, because you disappoint even the fools whose notice you attract? Is it, indeed, so gratifying to see Fitzroy bow to his thousand previous deities, and coldly pass them to place himself by you? Is it, indeed, so gratifying to see that little, pale, deserted girl struggling for a smile, while you parade her infatuated brother through the rooms at Ashton-House? or to sit in an attitude in your Opera-box as a point towards which all the glasses in the pit should turn?

Warning is given you—retreat in time—have courage to do right. Think of your home, your husband, and leave Claude Forester to his destiny.”

“ Dear me, Lady Glenallan,” exclaimed a female friend, who entered half an hour afterwards, “ I can’t conceive what you can find to fret about.”

“ Can’t you?” responded the young Countess, dipping her handkerchief in some Eau de Cologne, and applying it to her forehead.

“ No, indeed, I can’t; all the men run after you—all the women are jealous of you—you’ve no children—no lapdogs—no sisters-in-law—none of the torments of married life. You are as rich as Croesus, and ——”

Bessie Glenallan looked from the window,

“ Yes, it’s a very empty park—very dull—

been so wet all the morning; but I should think you would be at no loss for amusement—got your harp and all the new books, I see. Are you going to Lady Maskingham's to-night?"

"Yes—no—why?"

"*Why?* Really, my dear Lady Glenallan, something must have happened; you're quite absent; you know every one will be there."

"True—yes—oh, I shall go, certainly." He shall not fancy that I am sad for his sake, thought Bessie, and she sighed again.

Full of excellent resolutions, Lady Glenallan ordered her carriage, bathed her eyes, and drove to South Audley-street. She found Lucy alone, and proposed to her to drive out, which was gladly assented to. As they returned, Bessie said to her little companion,

“I shall call in the evening to see if you will go to the ball. Do go; I never saw you look better. And then,” thought she, as the carriage drove off, “I will have a few words of explanation with poor dear Linton, and after that I will play the coquette no more, for it is all very true ——” And again Lady Glenallan sighed.

Lady Glenallan and Lucy were late at the ball, owing to the difficulty the former had found in persuading Miss Linton to go at all. But Bessie, like most selfish people trying to do a goodnatured thing, would take no denial; and though Lucy persisted that she was more weak and weary than usual, her chaperone waited till she was dressed, and carried her off in triumph.

The ball-room opened on an illuminated

garden, and Lady Glenallan was standing on the stone steps which led to the principal walks, when Lord Linton hastily addressed her, "Let me speak three words to you—pray, pray hear me, dearest."

Startled and confounded, Lady Glenallan neither spoke nor moved, while, in a rapid and confused manner, he explained that he had heard a story of her attachment to Claude Forester, of their parting, of her agitation at seeing him the night before; and he conjured her by all that was holy, not to trifle with him, but at once to confess, either her love for Claude, or her willingness to fly with himself to the uttermost parts of the earth.

"May I dance? Do you think it will be safe for me to dance, Linton?" asked the gentle voice of his sister.

“Yes, yes, love ; no, I mean—yes, dance by all means ; dance.”

“I have really your leave ?” she continued, with a smile ; “I believe you scarcely heard my question.”

“Yes, yes, my dear Lucy ; you wish to dance—go now—go—I am quite willing you should dance to-night.—Oh ! Lady Glenallan—Oh ! Bessie ! answer me—speak to me !”

But another voice was in Bessie’s ear. As they stood in the shadow of the portico, unseen by those who were walking in the garden, Claude Forester and a young lady passed close to them.

“Do not deceive me,” said Claude, “I have been deceived once, and I tell you fairly, that my contempt and disgust for the most wretched profligate of her sex, is weak to what I feel

towards the coquette, who, with no temptation but vanity, trifles with—" the words were lost in the distance. Yet, as the speaker returned, Bessie thought she distinguished her own name in the murmuring protestations of Claude's companion.

" He scorns me—he holds me up as a warning, as an example, he—Claude—the only being whom I ever really loved!" and Lady Glenallan leaned her head against the portico, too faint even for tears. " Speak to me—speak to me—answer me, beloved Bessie!" She had forgotten *him*.

Shuddering, she attempted to withdraw her hand from the death-like clasp of his, while she exclaimed in agony. " Oh! well might he scorn me! Let me go, infatuated boy! you know not what you love—Oh! let me depart

and die, I am sick, sick at heart! I have not heard you—I know not what you have said, or what I have answered—I am a fool—a miserable, vain, accursed fool. I am—Oh! God forgive me!”

“Lord Linton! Lord Linton! Lord Linton!” cried several voices, in a tone of alarm and horror. “Lord Linton! your sister!” said Lord Glenallan, as he made his way through the crowd, and seized the arm of the unhappy young man. Instantly he darted forward—and Bessie followed; drawn by that fearful impulse which prompts us to leap the precipice we shudder to gaze from.

A silent circle was formed where the dance had been; the music had only ceased that moment—there was but one sound through the wide room where hundreds were collected:

and that sound was the gasping breath of him who knelt with the slight form of Lucy Linton supported in his arms. All that yet deceitfully told of life, was the shivering communicated by his trembling grasp. He laid her down, and felt that he gazed on a corpse. Peals of laughter, and merry voices, came faintly from the garden, where the event was yet unknown.

“Oh, stop them ! stop them !” exclaimed Lord Linton, as he gazed towards the portico. “Oh ! madman ! fool ! *to let her dance !*” and as he muttered these words in a tone of agony, his eye fell on Lady Glenallan, with an expression that froze her very soul.

A terrible dream seemed to haunt her ; a dream from which she *could* not wake. Slowly and with effort she withdrew her eyes, and gazed

round the circle,—all, all were gazing spell-bound and horror-struck, on that awful sight; all but *one*.

Claude Forester supported the girl with whom he had been walking, and whose gaze was rivetted on that mournful group of the young brother and his dead sister. *His* eye alone sought another face—Bessie Glenallan met it—and fainted.

Many, many years have passed since that night of sudden horror. They have danced in that same ball room, to the self-same tunes: and the name of Lucy Linton is a sound forgotten even by those who knew her best. But Lady Glenallan yet remembers in her prayers that fearful evening, and smiles tearfully in her husband's face, as, for the thousandth time, he repeats to comfort her, the certainty that poor

Lucy would have died in a few days at all events ; and pressing his little daughter's silken curls against her mother's cheek, bids her guide and guard her well, lest she too should be a Coquette.

THE TRAITOR.

THE TRAITOR.

IDA, BERTRAM.

IDA.

At length we meet ; how I have sought for thee,
That my full heart might vent itself in words,
And so find rest. Oh Bertram, is it true ?
Hast thou entrapped, betrayed, lured on to death
The man who was thy general ? whose arm
(Thou couldst not slay him but in manacles !)
So oft hath fought and conquered by thy side ?
Hast thou done this ?

BERTRAM.

I have. And were it still
To do again, I would repeat the deed.
From the hushed camp, at midnight, forth I led
him,
Under pretence to show the secret pass
Which leads to Ilderstein. His boasted watch
Heard not the creaking of the iron doors
That closed upon their proud victorious chief.
He thanked me as he went; yet chide not thou,
For Ida, had I loved *thee* less perchance
I had been less a traitor.

IDA.

Love me, Bertram!
Love me! why so you loved Count Insinger—
Or *said* you loved! so stood in his bright presence—
So watched his open undeceiving eye—
And read therein the temper of his mind—
Whom yet thou hast betrayed to chains and death.

And thou didst let them thank thee! Bertram!

Bertram!

Did not thy blood run cold when his true hand
Grasped thine? When from his unsuspecting tongue,
The words of thankfulness gushed forth, as 'twere
From the full fountain of a grateful heart?
Didst thou not shrink and shudder at his touch?

BERTRAM.

He is mine enemy, and thine; the foe
Of all thy father's house; the oppressor's tool
Wherewith we are ground to dust. *I was* his soldier—
But that was when he loved the armour's rust
Better than ermined robe or waving plume—
He is too courtly for a general!
And as I loved him once, so now I hate him!

IDA.

Why, meet him then upon the battle field:
There, front to front, make ye your quarrel sooth;

And God be with the right ! Now mark me, Bertram !
Thou hast been counted brave. When horrid death
Was round thee, and above thee, and beneath thee—
When the loud clash of arms, the roar of guns,
The shouts confused of those that fought and won,
The feeble groans of those who fought and fell,
Were hoarsely mingled in one common sound ;—
And the sulphureous canopy of smoke,
Slow floating on the carnage-sickened breeze,
Gave distant glimpses of the routed foe ;—
High hast thou felt thy heart in triumph bound.
Look back to them, for never shall those days
Return to bless thee with a glorious joy.
Go where thou wilt, the curse of *fear* goes with thee !
The consciousness that thou hast played the traitor—
That in this wide and weary world of ours,
There is *one* voice whose tones would chill thy heart,
One eye before whose glance thine own must quail.
This single thought shall scare thy midnight hour,

Dash from thy feasting lips the untasted cup,
Unnerve thine arm in combat, blanch thy cheek,
And make a *coward* of thee, German soldier !

BERTRAM.

Ida !

IDA.

There is a mournful mockery in thy tone,
For it doth bring me back thy better days,
When my lone prayers, breathed forth at Heaven's
high throne

Were not thy scoff ; when on that iron brow
Guilt had not set his seal, nor fierce revenge
Lit up a dreadful fire within thine eyes.
Then thou *didst* love me ; then my voice could sway—
Then life—oh ! happy days !

BERTRAM.

Thou weapest, Ida !

IDA.

Should I not weep, remembering what thou wert,

To witness what these fearful years have made thee?
But *he!* thou'lt free him, Bertram, wilt thou not?
For my sake—*mine!* Ah! wherefore dost thou pause?
Even now thy shrinking and irresolute eye
Wanders from place to place, as though the earth
Were a broad tablet, from whose written rules
Thou might'st direct thy course. Wilt free him,
Bertram?

BERTRAM.

I have no power.

IDA.

I know thou hast not power
To open wide his prison doors, and say,
“Go forth and breathe again the mōuntain breeze,
And slake thy hot brow in the mountain stream,
And climb with vigorous limb the mountain's side,
And grasp thy brother warriors' hands in thine,
For thou art free!”

This, Bertram, *this* I know thou canst not do;

The lion *thou* hast toiled the hunters guard,
And well by day and night their watch is kept.
But thou who couldst so wisely plot to slay,
Canst thou not plot to save? Is there no hope,
No wild escape, no glimmering ray of light?
Oh! if you ever loved me, free this man!

BERTRAM.

Vain is thy adjuration! vain thy prayer!
The feverish brow lies cold; the well nerved limbs,
Slackened and stiff, no longer need more space
Than half the narrow dungeon could afford.
Death—*death* hath freed Count Insinger!

IDA.

Oh, heaven!
But thou dost jest—thou couldst not tell it me
So calmly, were it true; thy lip would quiver,
Thine eye would shrink; thy hand, thy hand, would
tremble;
Thy voice would falter forth the horrid words,

Even as a tale of blood is ever told;
Thy brow—oh, God! that grim and gloomy smile
Sends a chill poison creeping through my veins!
And yet it *is* not true! he could not die!
Young, proud, brave, beautiful; but yestermorn
The chief of thousands, who would all have given
Their life's blood, drop by drop, for love of him.
He could not die! Who told me he was dead?
The tameless energy, the aspiring hope,
The proud ambition, the unshaken truth,
That dwelt within his heart—have all these perished?
Is his name but a sound? his memory
A flitting shadow, which from time to time
Shall steal across our hearts and sadden them,
And pass away again like other shadows?
Is all that *was* Count Insinger cold dust! (*Pauses.*)
Save me, dear Bertram, playmate of my youth!
For horrible dreams are madd'ning my poor brain;
Catch me, and fold me closely to thy bosom,

Ere that dark rivulet of crimson blood
Which flows between us part our souls for ever.
Hark ! there are voices ringing through the air ;
They call thee, "*murderer*," but answer not.
I'll hide thee ! not in the earth for there he lies ;
Nor in the sea, for blood hath tinged its waves ;
But in my heart—my wrung and broken heart !

(*Sinks down.*)

I had a loved companion of thy name
In days long past, and for his sake I'll hide thee ;
And thou shalt bear a message from my lips
To his far distant ear. He'll weep for me—
I know he'll weep ; I would have wept for *him*
Though he forsook me. Tell him that his name
Was the last sound that lingered on my tongue.
Bertram ! it is earth's music ! Bertram ! *now !*

(*Dies.*)

BERTRAM.

If thou hadst cursed me, pale and broken flower,

I could have borne it; if thy heart's deep love
Had turned to hate, I could have braved that hate.
But *this* ! oh God !--

LAMENT OF THE POET SAVAGE.

LAMENT OF THE POET SAVAGE.

Savage was so touched by the discovery of his real mother, that it was his frequent practice to walk in the dark evenings for several hours before her door, in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window, or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.

Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

I.

HAVE ye looked out across the wide green sea,
With all its mountain billows raging round ;
And gazing on it, gathered bitterly
Unto yourselves the memory of the drowned ?

While others gazing with you, in that sound,
Heard nothing but the ocean's ceaseless roar,—
Have *ye* in every wave beheld a mound
O'er one who hath no grave; whence float to
shore
Fond fancied words from him whose lips shall breathe
no more?

II.

So o'er *my* gaze across the world's wide sea!
Sad memory still her veil of darkness flings,
Dims with her clouds my soul's full extasy,
And drieth up joy's gushing natural springs.
So, though to others Time some comfort brings,
For me it hath no voice, no soothing balm;
Still wearily my spirit droops its wings,
Shrinks sickening from the crowd-awarded palm,
And yearns for *one* wrecked hope which hath destroyed
its calm.

III.

Oh, to forget it ! but for one bright day,
An hour ; a happy moment ; oh ! to sleep
And dream not of it ; to arise and say,
Lo ! here is morning ; and to feel no deep
And sickening consciousness of cause to weep
Weigh down the waking soul : to smile nor fear
The shades that round my couch their vigil keep,
Will haunt even then, and murmur in mine ear,—
How canst thou smile when *we*, the doubly lost
are near.

IV.

Blow ye wild breezes, o'er my native hills,—
Bend ye wild flowers, beneath their gladsome
breath,—
Gush on in beauty, founts whose music fills
The voiceless air,—the taint of sin and death,

Th' eternal curse that all must bow beneath,
Rests not on you : Forth on its endless quest
It sweeps o'er sunny bank and desolate heath,
To find a home within the human breast,
A feared, and loathed, and scorned, but never banished
guest.

v.

The beautiful things of earth ! how I have loved
To feed my spirit in its silent trance
When lone, but free, my eager footsteps roved ;
(With each new charm that met my wandering
glance :)
The sky—the trees—the flowers—all things which
chance
Or my own seeking brought ; but that is past !
Never ! oh never more my heart shall dance,
Sending it crimson torrent warm and fast
To veins whose rushing tide flows cold and slow at last !

VI.

Deserted—scorned—abjured—ere yet I knew
What such desertion was ; my form, my name,
My very being known but to a few,
And by those few remembered with deep shame,
As an eternal blot upon the fame
Of those who fearing not to sin, did yet
Fear the upbraiding eyes whose scorn could tame
Proud hearts that quailed at every glance they
met,
And having loved in sin, could nature's love forget.

VII.

Thus rose life's faint and clouded light to me,
And yet I *had* a heart, whose fervent love,
Whose power to suffer all things patiently,
Whose boundless hope that still for mastery strove,
In value might have proved itself above

The sacrifice affection made to fear ;
But never may that heart its fondness prove,
Mine is the bitter disregarded tear,
The blight which wastes the soul from weary year to
year.

VIII.

Mother unknown, but not the less adored,
How hath my soul gone forth in search of
thine !
How hath my wild and eager spirit poured
In its lone watchings on the face divine
Of heaven's blue midnight, prayers that might
incline
The Powers above to hush this passionate storm
Of ruined hopes, and bid me cease to pine
With feverish longing for thy fancied form,
Quelling within my heart its never-dying worm.

IX.

What wild far thoughts—what unrecorded dreams
Of thy bright beauty ; of thy gushing tears ;
When, in forsaking me, some dying gleams
Of tenderness — some faint half buried fears
Of what *might* be my fate in after years ;
Awoke within thy soul, and bade thee weep,
Shrouding the pained and heavy eyes which gazed
On thy deserted infant's quiet sleep ;—
Across my lonely heart have learnt at times to
sweep.

X.

How have I prayed to Him the Holy One
Who still hath guarded thy forsaken child—
To lead my steps where thine before had gone,
And let me feed my soul with visions wild,
Of how thine eyes *had* looked—thy lips had smiled,

To lead me even renounced—abjured by thee,
Beneath th' illumined lattice, where beguiled
By present thoughts and feelings, silently
Thou dwellest now without one wandering thought
of me.

XI.

That I might see thy shadow in that room
Glide to and fro upon the marble wall,
And from my station in night's circling gloom,
Watch thee, and dream I heard thy footsteps fall
Lightly in that (to me) forbidden hall ;
Conjure thy low sweet voice by fancy's art,
Shed wild and burning tears unseen by all
Whose chilling gaze forbid those drops to start,
And feel a strange joy swell within my rapturous
heart.

XII.

Oh ! Mother, youth is vanished from thy life,
The rose of beauty faded from thy cheek,

Little to thee this world of guilt and strife,
Thy fame—men's scorn—are shadows faint and
weak ;
And yet thou wilt not let me hear thee speak
Words frozen back by woman's struggling pride.
Thou wilt not let me in thy bosom seek
The rest for which my heart hath vainly sighed ;
This—*this* was all I asked—and this thou hast
denied !

XIII.

Lone hath my life been ; lone, and very sad ;
And wasted is the form thou wouldst not know ;
And some have cursed, and some have deemed me
mad,
And sorrow hath drawn lines upon my brow.
Ah who could cheer me half so well as thou ?
Who could so soothe my feverish dreams of pain ?

Yet never for my sake thy tears shall flow.

Unheard, unheeded, still must I complain,

And to the hollow winds pour forth my woe in
vain.

SUMMER'S GONE.



HARK ! thro' the dim wood dying,

With a moan,

Faintly the winds are sighing—

Summer's gone !

There, when my bruised heart feeleth,

And the pale moon her face revealeth,

Darkly my footstep stealeth,

To weep alone.

Hour after hour I wander,
By men unseen—
And sadly my wrung thoughts ponder
On what *hath* been.
Summer's gone !

There, in our green bowers
Long ago,
Our path through the tangled flowers
Treading slow ;
Oft hand in hand entwining—
Oft side by side reclining—
We've watched in its crimson shining
The sunset glow.
Dimly that sun now burneth
For me alone—
Spring after spring returneth,
Thou art gone.—
Summer's gone.

Still on my worn cheek playeth

The restless breeze ;

Still in its freshness strayeth

Between the trees.

Still the blue streamlet gusheth—

Still the broad river rusheth—

Still the calm silence husheth

The heart's disease : ..

But *who* shall bring our meetings

Back again ?

What shall recal *thy* greetings—

Loved in vain !

Summer's gone.

THE
SPIRIT OF THE HURRICANE,

VOL. I.

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THE
SPIRIT OF THE HURRICANE.

CHAPTER I.

It is strange how calmly we read, or how carelessly we pass over, events in the public prints, which, did we witness them, or hear them described by an eye-witness, would melt us to tears, or startle us with horror. It may be the selfishness of our nature which pities more the little woe it is forced to look upon,

than greater suffering which appeals not to our senses, but comes like a tale of olden times to our ear:—It may be the habitual incredulity with which newspapers—those “organs of the public mind”—are perused by the greater portion of his majesty’s subjects: the consciousness that the same story told in seven different papers, will be told in seven different ways; and that the starving wretch who has moved our compassion in the police report of the *Times*, may by a different version of his affairs, be made to provoke our laughter in the *Morning Herald*:—It may be our incapacity of attaching the same importance to things at a distance, and those immediately within our own observation*:—I say it may

* I know a village full of respectable inhabitants, (staunch whigs, whose every-day dress was a smock frock and leather

be from any or all of these causes, (and a wide field does the question open to the curious in metaphysics,) but the fact is certain, that the description of a shipwreck or a hurricane, in which millions of property and hundreds of lives have been lost, is not read with half as much emotion (by the generality of newspaper readers), as the account of the sufferings of an undervalued, over-whipped, Westminster school-boy.

It was from one who had been a witness of the horrors of the Barbadoes hurricane; whose heart had been riven, whose reason partially obscured by the events connected with that appalling visitation, that I collected the few facts which form the ground-work of this narrative,) where the stoning to death of Miss Rachel Smith's cat entirely overpowered the interest they felt, when the old ministry sat down to consider what they could do, if the new ministry were fairly turned out, and gave up the point in despair.

tive. "An ow'r true tale" it is, and one in which neither the obscure rank of its heroine, nor the *peu romanesque* crime and punishment of its hero, could prevent my taking the most lively and painful interest.

It was in the July of 18—, that the beautiful vessel, *La Gloire*, anchored off the coast of Barbadoes. She had on board her usual complement of men and sailors; her captain Auguste Delmar; and passengers to different parts of the West Indian Islands.

Among so many individuals, three particularly claim our attention; Charles Louvel, the second mate; Henri Lafitte, midshipman; and M. Van Bröckel, a Dutch planter, and proprietor of immense estates in Barbadoes.

Charles Louvel was a general favourite on board *La Gloire*; his frank, handsome face,

shaded by the long ringlets sailors are so proud of; his gay laugh; his store of anecdotes, sometimes witty, sometimes pathetic; his untiring goodnature; his activity and eagerness in whatever might be his employment for the time; his recklessness of danger: all these peculiarly *sailor-like* qualities had their due weight on the hearts and minds of his messmates. Only with the captain, who was strict even to harshness, Charles Louvel was not a favourite.

Auguste Delmar was young, and proud of his command: educated himself in the strictest rules of subordination by the admiral his father; accustomed to hear day by day, from the lips of that revered parent, precepts and lessons inculcating order in the minutest things, as absolutely necessary to the quiet government of that little world, a man-of-war, he impressed

it rigorously on those under him. The kindness of Louvel's heart, his willingness to oblige his companions, did not excuse, in Captain Delmar's eyes, an occasional carelessness in the execution of his duty; and Louvel's song, and Louvel's story, which counterbalanced in his messmates' opinions, the habit he had acquired of occasional intoxication, only incensed his stern superior the more, since the unchanging gaiety of his manner seemed to prove a recklessness of reproof, and contempt of authority.

No serious fault, however, had as yet drawn down on Louvel a marked punishment. Delmar, though strict, was just; and though he certainly would rather the man had not belonged to his ship, he took no harsh and oppressive means of proving his dislike.

But if the captain did not share in the

enthusiasm Louvel inspired, Henri Lafitte, the youngest, sickliest and palest, of all boys who ever were sent to "rough it" as midshipmen, amply made up for his lack of love. Too feeble for the sports—too timid and tearful for the jests of his wilder companions—too simple and neglected to be able to converse with the more gentlemanlike and intelligent of the little community; his long days and wearisome evenings were spent in that worst of all solitude—loneliness in a crowd of busy creatures. Shrinking from some, avoided or overlooked by others, taunted by a few, and going by the appellation of "la petite blonde," or "Mam'selle Fanny," the orphan boy scarcely ever moved his lips to speak or smile.

He bore the lonely watch at night as he

best could, remembering, as he looked across the cold waste of waters, the sweet face of his mother, shading the lamp with her hand, and bending over his bed to bless him; and then crept to his hammock to shed unnoticed tears. For him the waves had no freshness, the winds no melody, till the day that Charles Louvel first noticed his slight figure, leaning anxiously forward to catch the thread of the story he was telling.

So struck was the seaman by the deep melancholy imprinted on so young a face, that he paused to gaze on him, and followed up the tale by an account of the exploits of a certain Captain Lafitte, who was Henri's grandfather, and whose courage and kindness were scarcely surpassed by "the gallant, good Riou."

At no age is the pride of ancestral fame more strong than in the dawn of our days. Henri's pale cheek flushed, his eye sparkled, as the sailor spoke. And his companions—they who had taunted him—looked from the narrator to the neglected boy, and honoured him for being Captain Lafitte's grandson. In the excitement of the moment, Henri himself seemed something of a hero in their eyes; and when the last battle was fought, and the death of Lafitte was described, waving his country's flag above his head ere his arm dropped powerless by his side, they unanimously gave three loud, hearty cheers.

From that hour the boy's character seemed to change; he walked with a lighter step; he laughed at little jests; he listened to the

wind singing through the shrouds, and mocked it; wondering that its voice had ever sounded sad to his ear; he mingled with the other midshipmen, and all of them assured him he was an altered being.

But most he loved to talk to Charles Louvel of his home in France, of his fair mother; of his sister, *la petite Fanchette*; of his buried father; and all those memories of the heart, which after years of folly or of crime may smother, but cannot extinguish; even as the pure stars are clouded over, and yet burn brightly behind the mass of murky vapour which hides them from our eyes.

To all these tales of Henri's childhood, Charles Louvel listened attentively; and he, too, would talk of his sister, or rather half-

sister, since she was the daughter, not of his mother, but of a woman of colour whom his father (who was also a sailor) had fallen in love with when he came to Barbadoes many years ago.

To this girl, according to Louvel's account, nothing could compare : not as he himself said, that she was very beautiful (except her eyes), but her voice was so soft, and her step so gentle, and she loved Charles better than any other created being. It was for *her* sake he was so glad to go to Barbadoes : he had not seen her since she was fifteen, and that was three years ago ; it was for *her* sake he was so anxious, so impatient, for leave to go ashore as soon as the ship had reached her destination.

At length the happy moment arrived ; with

a light heart Louvel sprang into the boat, singing in the *patois* common among the French slaves, a well-known Barbadian air:—

“Toi aimez moi, Marie,
Quand moi vais partir, ma chère !
Toi aimez moi, Marie,
Car moi vais mourir.”

Poor Louvel ! little did he or any of his messmates think that it was to be the last time his voice should ever take the tone of gaiety ; and that those simple but melancholy French lines, so carelessly repeated, contained a vague prophecy of his approaching fate.

Surely it is a blessed gift from the merciful Creator, our ignorance of what is to be ; and yet how often do we blindly seek to penetrate the future, though to know it were to

double all our woes in the expectation of the blow, and make joy tasteless by the certainty of its fulfilment!

Charles Louvel had gained, in one half hour, the humble dwelling of the freed slave ✓ who was mother to his beloved sister Pauline. Symptoms of neglect—of disorder—struck him as he rapidly approached the door. It was open; he entered unperceived, and in the inner room he beheld his young sister, kneeling by the low matted bed, with a small crucifix in her hands, which she pressed to her bosom:—while low and stifled sobs from time to time escaped her.

An exclamation of painful surprise broke from his lips; and Pauline, hastily rising, stood for an instant as if doubtful who she saw, then flinging herself on his bosom, she wept

there with a weak wailing cry like that of a forsaken child.

Long she wept ; and it was not till many a sorrowful kiss had been printed on her brow, and the plaits of her black and glossy hair stroked back with a brother's fondness, as if the caress might help to soothe her, that Charles ventured to ask the meaning of the misery he beheld, and what ailed her mother, who lay on the mat in a heavy stupor.

Pauline explained, with many a rapid gesture, to which her graceful figure and wild dark eyes gave eloquence and beauty, that for the last year everything had gone wrong with them ; her mother had been not only unable to earn anything, but had required constant attendance, and was so much addicted to the use of spirituous liquors, that it had, she firmly

believed, brought on her death; that to add to their misery, the overseer of the estate her mother had formerly belonged to, had been to persuade her that the best thing she could do was to surrender herself a slave, since she was starving where she was, and would, at her mother's death, be utterly alone in the world.

On her refusal to agree to this plan, Pauline said the overseer became furious, and swore he would have her claimed as one of the slave children belonging to the estate, and seized accordingly. "I knew there were none to defend me," said the poor girl. "I have lived in hourly dread of being seized; I have been afraid to move, even if I had dared to leave my mother. I have not so much money as would buy a cake of bread; and for the last three

days I have tasted nothing but a slice of water-melon which an old woman gave me in charity."

Charles Louvel strained her to his heart, which throbbed with mingled feelings of agony, affection, and pride; and at length hiding his face in his hands, the rough sailor sat down and wept. When he became calm, he took Pauline's hands in his, and stedfastly gazing into her face, he said, "No, my poor sister, you shall not starve; you shall not be a prey to the cruelty of avaricious men. Captain Delmar will not hear our story unmoved; I will ask him for my pay in advance, and bring it you. You shall get the washing from our ship, and pay some one to help you; and before I go, we will arrange some plan for your leaving this island for the country where there are no slaves."

Pauline smiled through her tears, and waving her hand to him as he disappeared, she sank down again by the side of the invalid, to recommence her patient and unwearied watch.

When Charles Louvel stood again on the deck of *La Gloire*, his disappointment was great at finding the captain was gone on shore. His was a case which admitted of no delay, and naturally impatient, as well as affectionate, his brain whirled almost to madness when he figured his young desolate sister spending another night without food. He turned abruptly, and asked two or three of his companions for money, but none of them were able to assist him ; they all hoped and expected, but the present, *the present* was what he wished to brighten.

The wild and almost impracticable plan of

following the captain on shore, and *there* urging his request for some loan or advance of money, flashed across his mind. Then rose the remembrance of Delmar's stern inflexibility; of his resentment of anything bordering on disrespect. "Even if I find him," murmured Louvel, "can I follow him into a merchant's house, or stop him in the street and ask for my pay? No; and yet it is a matter of life and death. Pauline! my sister!" He paused irresolute.

At this moment, M. Van Bröckel, who was walking up and down the vessel, stopped and feeling in his pocket as if in search of something, he turned to Louvel, and begged him to go down into his cabin and bring him a telescope, which he had left there when looking over some papers. The seaman, with instinc-

tive readiness to oblige, started from his reverie, and went below. He entered the cabin, found the telescope, and was rapidly preparing to go on deck, when his foot caught in the cloth which hung over the table; part of the cloth slipped; and a box which was near the edge, fell off, and opening in the fall, displayed a quantity of gold and silver coin, which rolled over the floor in all directions.

A thought, rapid and electric, brought a crimson glow to Louvel's cheek. He knelt, and hastily picking up the money, flung it in, shut the box, (which he grasped as though he would have glued its fastenings together,) and stood at the cabin door.

He paused—he thought of Pauline—he thought of her words—“for three days I have only eaten a piece of water-melon.” He went

back and opened the box, and gazed at the heap of coin which glittered before his eyes. "How little, how very little of this, would make *her* happy! I could replace it when Captain Delmar paid me;—no one would know it. It would take an hour to tell this money over." And with the last idea came a vision of Van Bröckel counting it—of his discovery and disgrace.

He covered his face with his hands, and with a bitter execration rushed from the spot.

His foot was on the last step but one of the cabin stair, the fresh cooling sea-breeze fanned his cheek, when he recollected that, in his confusion, he had left the telescope, for which he had been sent, on the table.

Slowly he again descended—slowly he entered the cabin, and stood lost in thought at

the fatal spot. Wild were his dreams—wild and quick; they chased one another through his mind like lightning flashes in a storm; and in one he saw his sister—his forsaken Pauline—seized by the ruffianly overseer, and dragged to a shameful and oppressive toil; he saw the slave-driver raise his whip to strike her bended figure; he started fiercely, to interpose his arm between that delicate and graceful form and her tyrant guide; he struck a blow—the vision vanished, and the ringing coin vibrated below his heavy hand, as it rested, numbed with its own violence, on the lid of the treasure chest! Oh, ye rich, when will the poor and wretched feel that they have no right to one atom of your superfluity, even though your gains should be hoarded only for the pleasure of counting them? Louvel thrust his hand into the box; he looked

not to see whether it was gold or silver ; he stayed not to count the stolen money, but he took a handful, thrust it into his pocket, and ran on deck with the telescope.

Van Bröckel saw not his agitation—his eyes were fixed on the skies ; he raised the telescope, and muttered a prophecy of a storm. Louvel turned away ; he felt sick and faint as a frightened woman, but it was not fear of the coming storm which blanched his cheek.

CHAPTER II.



AGAIN the boat bounded over the waters ; but Louvel sang not—spoke not : his head leaned on his clenched hand, while the surf drifted in his face ; and his three companions looked at each other and wondered. Suddenly he started. The surf near the shore was rough and violent. Each wave beat the boat back to the open sea. A vague and insane fear of being pursued and taken, crept into his heart : he had never before known what fear was ; he felt it—it was a strange and thrilling agony.

He could no longer bear it; he leapt into the waters—they closed above his head. “Shall I then perish without saving *her*?” thought he; and the thought sent a fresh vigour to every limb. With desperate energy he reached the shore, and rushed to the hut: he flung the money at her feet, and sank exhausted.

A few moments passed away, and the girl spoke: “Pray with me, Charles, for my mother is just dead!” Her voice—her mournful voice smote on his soul.

“I cannot pray, Pauline; but there is money—money to save you—to bury her—to ruin me.”

His words were wild; but his young sister heeded not, for she was gazing on the face of the corpse. At length she turned: “I ought to thank you, I know I ought; dear *good* Charles,” said she, “but you have surely brought a great deal of

money; and, oh! Charles," continued she, with a look of surprise and disappointment, "I fear this will be of no use unless you can get it changed—*it is not the coin of the country!*"

A heavy blow from the hand of one we trusted—the sudden stab of the assassin's knife—the shock of an earthquake—are faint images of the stunning effect of this simple sentence on Charles Louvel. "Not the coin of the country!" He had then committed a grievous sin—disgraced his profession—risked his life—and wronged his neighbour, for a vain dream! "Not the coin of the country!" Pauline must then continue to suffer—perhaps perish of want. And yet they sat together with a heap of precious coin before them, as if to mock their misery! He could not change it,

even if he had known where to go for that purpose. What should a seaman do with a handful of gold coin, of which he did not even know the value? He would be instantly discovered. He looked up at his innocent sister with an expression of utter despair.

“Here, here,” said she, eagerly, “here is a little silver piece that will do—this one. This one !”

Charles rose, and they proceeded together to purchase food, and with many a promise of returning the next day, and a fearful hope of being enabled to replace the stolen money, he departed. That night, that first night of guilt and wretchedness, Louvel never closed his eyes, or if he did, a feverish start woke him with vague terror, from his momentary forgetfulness ; the next morning was one of intense agony ; he

waited—he watched. Van Bröckel at length made his appearance upon deck.

Charles Louvel breathed more freely, and at length, having watched his opportunity, he prepared to descend the cabin stairs, but suddenly the Captain, who had been conversing with Van Bröckel, called to him sternly to remain. But why should we dwell on this painful scene? Suffice it that in the view of his assembled ship-mates, Louvel was convicted of the theft; he produced the money, told his story, and was sentenced by Captain Delmar, who thought the present a fit opportunity for making an example of him, to receive one hundred and fifty lashes.

This sentence was duly executed, and at length the tortured and exhausted man was left to the care of the surgeon, who commenced dressing his wounds; not a groan, not a sigh, escaped the

seaman—the quivering flesh, raw with repeated stripes, was all which told of human life.

Presently a timid hand undid the fastening of the door, and with an appealing look at the surgeon, Henri Lafitte entered. For a moment the dim eye brightened, and the sufferer faintly murmured, “Quoi, M. Henri, vous daignez*.” “Tenez,” said the boy, while the tears rose to his eyes, “si la petite Fanchette mouroit de faim, que peut-être moi—aussi j’en aurai fait autant †.”

The sailor grasped the boy’s hand, and his lips trembled with an effort to speak; at length he gasped out, “you say that to console me, but nothing can comfort *me*—pain I can bear, but the shame ! the shame !”

* “What, Mr. Henry, you condescend.”

† “If little Fanchette was to die of hunger, perhaps I too should have done the same.”

Henri hesitated a few moments, and then he laid some money on the table, and said, "We have subscribed that for Pauline, how shall we get it conveyed to her?" An hysterical laugh was Louvel's only answer; he sank back in his chair; his lips parted with a ghastly smile, and the bubbling blood appeared on them. "He's dying—he's dying—my own kind Louvel!" shrieked the boy, as he knelt by his side.

"Hush, Monsieur Lafitte," said the surgeon, "he has broken a blood vessel, but he may recover."

In the hospital of Barbadoes, by the side of the wasted form of her adored brother, sat the dark-eyed Pauline; her face was wan with watching, her eyes heavy with tears; from time to time a low short cough startled her into agony, and then again there was a dead silence.

“ I am so thankful that I shall not survive this disgrace,” said Charles Louvel feebly, as he half turned his head towards his patient nurse. She could have shrieked and knelt to him, and begged him to live for *her*, and her only, but she stifled back her agony, for she knew that vehement emotion would kill him. “ Is La Gloire still at anchor in the bay ? ” said he.

“ It is—it is—dear brother.”

“ Well,” said her brother, “ I hope before she weighs anchor, my bark of life will have reached the port. I could not bear to think her sails were set, and she on her way to La belle France without me. I should feel deserted—deserted ! ”

Pauline choked back her tears and was silent. The dying sailor closed his eyes, and faintly pressed the hand that held his. “ Oh

God," thought she, as she gazed on his wasted but still handsome countenance, "is this justice, or is it *murder*?" She looked again; the long black lashes lay on his sunken cheek, and his breathing was scarcely perceptible; suddenly he opened his eyes.

"Did you ever love?" asked he. "I have never loved any but you, Charles."

"Not me—not me," murmured he, with a faint smile; "Not your brother—some one when I am gone—to cherish you; you are so beautiful, so gentle."

"Oh never, never," passionately exclaimed Pauline, "if I do not love you, then shall I never love. I have had no thought, no dream of anything but you, since we were children together. If you live, I live; if you die, I die. Why not you, brother, why not *you*?" and she

repeatedly kissed the hand she held, while her tears flowed without restraint. But suddenly she checked herself and rose. "See," said she, with a mournful smile, "how I have wearied and agitated you. I will leave you—*shall* I leave you? and you will rest while I get some fruit for you." She left the hospital, and slowly wound her way to the market-place. The air was hot and heavy; so heavy that she could scarcely breathe.

Presently she met a crowd of people hurrying from the town; "what has happened?" exclaimed she. "The hurricane! the hurricane!" shouted some of those she addressed. "My brother!" said the wretched girl, "my brother! let me go to my brother!" But there was no returning; the dense crowds of terrified people pressed round her; she was

borne onward as by the course of a torrent; onward and onward; some hurrying, others dropping and fainting by the way, disregarded by their companions, whose bereft reason left them the mere instinct of life.

Still with a plaintive voice Pauline continued to mourn him whom she could not aid, and might not see. Suddenly the sound of a “rushing mighty wind” swept over the bosom of the earth, and ruffled the face of the waters; the multitude stood still like a frightened flock of sheep; they had no longer the heart to strive; they no longer knew which side to fly from the dark wings of the devouring hurricane spread above their heads.

It came, and horrible desolation was spread in a moment through the island; they were scattered, that multitude—like autumn leaves;

whirled here—dashed there—lifted up into the thick and choking atmosphere, or thrown to the earth by the fall of the palm trees which had shadowed them so long. The babe was crushed beneath the mother's breast; the bones of the strong man were broken like rotten wood; the shrieks of the dying, the wail of the living, the screams of racking pain, mingled confusedly with the wild roar of the tempest wind, and the distant dashing and booming of the agitated ocean.

Darkness was on the land and the sea—a horrid darkness which was not night; it seemed as if the last awful day had overtaken the sinful earth, and that its destruction had commenced; proud buildings, “the work of men's hands,” fell crashing and thundering to their foundation, the solid earth. Temples dedicated to God,

and pillared houses for the rich man, shared one common ruin—all was laid waste and desolate. Pauline remained insensible after the first shock, for some time: when she recovered, she found herself beneath a shelving rock, which, by the quantity of sea-weed drifted into it, she thought must be near the sea. From time to time stones, branches, and other things, were whirled past her; sometimes hitting her, sometimes leaving her uninjured; and all the while a horrible noise like the raging of a thousand furnaces, mingled with occasional crashing sounds, continued to affright her ears. Bruised, stiff, and languid, as she was, she yet felt that none of her limbs were broken, and devoutly thanked Heaven; she crept to the utmost verge of the cavern or rock, beneath which she had

been placed, and even amid the war of the elements, she slept.

For two days the hurricane raged; and then, having spent its fury, and performed the mysterious will of the Creator, the giant wind was lulled to rest, and the sullen waves dashed to and fro with lower crests at each succeeding rise and fall. Pauline crept forth, and having eaten part of a broken cocoa-nut, numbers of which lay scattered about, she with difficulty climbed outside the rock which had afforded her shelter, and from its summit gazed around upon the island. Oh! what a desolate scene was there! Ruined towns; villages swept away; woods overthrown; the ripe grain laid level with the earth, and the wrecks of vessels in the bay, where *La Gloire* had been so smoothly

anchored ! As this last thought passed through her mind, her brother's image rose before her. " Alas, alas ! how shall I find strength to reach the hospital ? " and she wept feebly.

" Look ! look ! " exclaimed a boy's voice near her ; " a woman is standing there, unhurt and alone. " " Hush ! " said his companion, " it cannot be a woman ; see how fearlessly she gazes round her over the ruined island : it is the Spirit of the Hurricane ! " " Spirit of nonsense, " said the boy again ; " it is a young and pretty creature, who has been saved by some strange mercy like ourselves. Come and speak to her, we may perhaps assist her. " " No, no ; let us look for Captain Delmar ; God knows what is become of him : and that poor fellow, Louvel ! I would give a great deal to know that he was safe. "

Pauline heard not the last kind sentence : at the sound of Captain Delmar's name she fled, as if it contained *in itself* a power to kill. At length she reached the town : heaps of dead or dying wretches lay in its streets, crushed by the fall of their houses ; in the principal street, underneath his horse, lay the lifeless body of young Delmar.

Shuddering, Pauline past on, to meet a yet more horrible sight. The hospital—that goal of her wild and unreasonable hopes—lay partly level with the ground, partly unroofed ; the principal beam in the building, which was a yard in thickness, had been shivered like a stick ; many of the sick had crawled outside the doors, and there died, too weak to creep further ; some had been crushed within. Pauline's eye wandered in search of Charles Louvel ; and

half she feared to meet a mangled corpse ; but as her glance rested on his pale, placid countenance close at her feet she almost thought he still lived. She knelt and passed her hand across his brow—she felt his heart—all was stiff and cold : but in one hand a few flowers she had given him, were still clasped ; and from the other, which was raised above his head, her handkerchief floated on the ground.

Pauline clapped her hands, and shrieked hysterically. “ Yes ! ” said she, “ he has died without pain—he has died waving me back, for he knew the storm was coming ! ” As she spoke, she sank on his body, never to rise again. Nature’s energies had been strained too far ; and there, by him for whom alone she lived, she died. Henri Lafitte and his shrinking companion, found their bodies, and buried them

side by side ; and many a year afterwards, their young brows saddened, and their voices changed, when they talked of THE SPIRIT OF THE HURRICANE !

THE FAREWELL.

THE FAREWELL.

I.

THOU'LT not remember me when we are parted,
Through every moment of the sunny day ;
Thou art too young, too careless, too light-hearted,
To let sad thoughts within thy bosom stay.
Thou'rt like a fountain which for ever strayeth
In sparkling changes 'neath the greenwood tree ;
Within thy heart eternal music playeth,
And while no bitter thought thy spirit weigheth,
Thou'lt not remember *me* !

II.

But thou wilt think of me at times, my dearest,
With yearning hope and wild impassioned love ;
When in the star-lit heaven the moon shines clearest,
And angels watch thy musings from above :
And patiently my heart its exile beareth ;
And all the prouder shall my triumph be,
That thou, whose eager soul each pleasure weareth,
Who lovest *all* so well thy spirit shareth,—

Should, more than all, love *me* !

III.

Thou'lt not remember me, when gaily dancing,
Those fairy steps fly thro' the lighted hall ;
Nor when a thousand merry eyes are glancing,
Bright with the laughter of their festival.
But when the sweet and silent evening bringeth,
A holy quiet over land and lea,
When the young violet in the darkness springeth,
And the lone night bird in the dim wood singeth,

Then, thou wilt think of me !

IV.

Thou'lt not remember me, when, crowding round thee,
The coxcomb flatterers bid thee touch thy lute,
And those red restless lips, whose promise bound thee,
With mocking smile command them to be mute :
But when some lover, (while the cold moon winketh,)
Whispers his vows, unwelcome though they be ;
When through his eyes his soul thy beauty drinketh,
And from *his* burning hand thine own hand shrinketh,

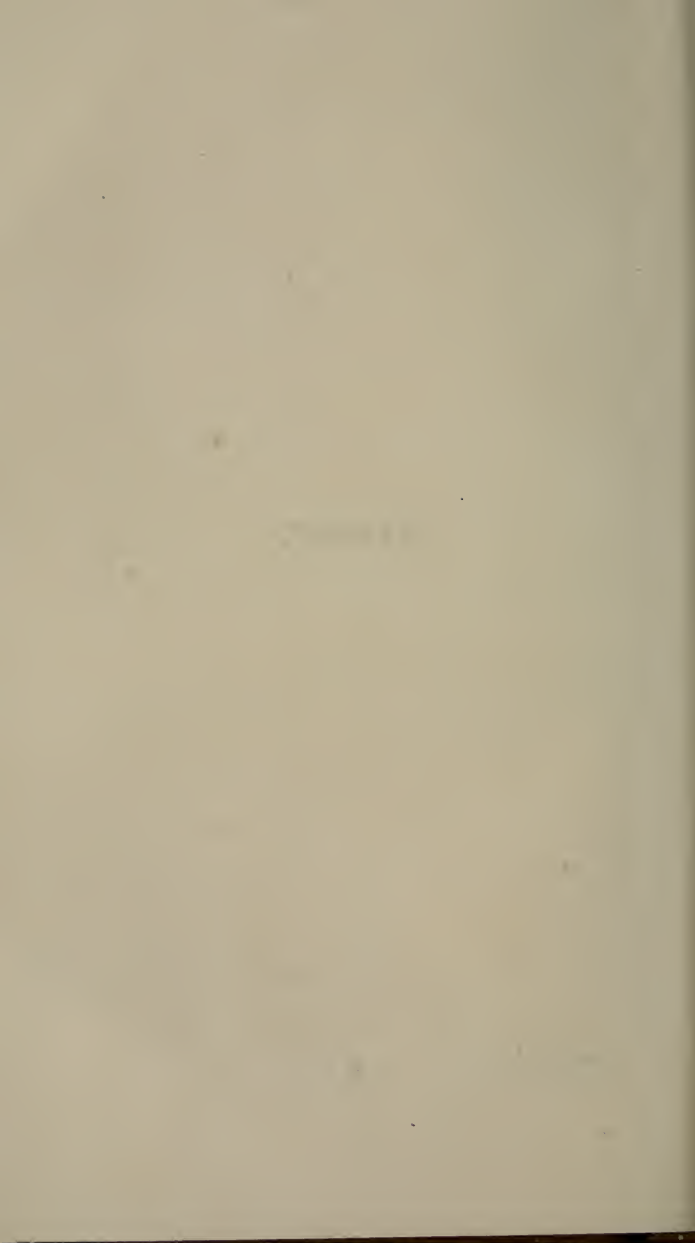
Then, thou wilt think of me !

V.

And not for all the palest shadows stealing
O'er maidens brow whom love hath taught to pine,
Would I give up the sudden gush of feeling,
That swells to tears that merry heart of thine !
Bright proofs that still thy memory is keeping,
(Careless and glad although thy manner be,)
The imaged form of one who watched thy sleeping—
Smiled when thou smiledst—wept when thou wert
weeping,

And ever sighs for thee !

NIGHT.



NIGHT.

I.

NIGHT sinks upon the dim grey wave,
Night clouds the spires that mark the town;
On living rest, and grassy grave,
The shadowy night comes slowly down.
And now the good and happy rest,
The wearied peasant calmly sleeps,
And closer to its mother's breast,
The rosy child in slumber creeps.

II.

But *I*!—The sentry, musing lone—
The sailor on the cold grey sea
So sad a watch hath never known,
As that which must be kept by me.
I cannot rest, thou solemn night!
Thy very silence hath the power
To conjure sounds and visions bright,
Unseen—unheard—in daylight's hour.

III.

Kind words, whose echo will not stay,
Memory of deep and bitter wrongs :
Laughter, whose sound hath died away,
And snatches of forgotten songs :
These haunt my soul ;—and as I gaze
Up to the calm and quiet moon,
I dream 'tis morning's breeze that plays,
Or sunset hour, or sultry noon.

IV.

I hear again the voice whose tone
Is more to me than music's sound,
And youthful forms for ever gone,
Come in their beauty crowding round.
I start—the mocking dreams depart,
Thy loved words melt upon the air,
And whether swells or sinks my heart,
Thou dost not know—thou dost not care !

V.

Perchance while thus I watch unseen,
Thy languid eyelids slowly close,
Without a thought of what hath been,
To haunt thee in thy deep repose.
Oh weary night, oh endless night,
Blank pause between two feverish days,
Roll back your shadows, give me light,
Give me the sunshine's fiercest blaze !

VI.

Give me the glorious noon ! alas !
What reck's it by what light I pray,
Since hopeless hours must dawn and pass,
And sleepless night succeed to day ?
Yet cold, and blue, and quiet sky,
There *is* a night where all find rest,
A long, long night :—with those who *die*
Sorrow hath ceased to be a guest !

THE BROKEN VOW.

THE BROKEN VOW.

CHAPTER I.

HARRY DUNSTAN was the younger son of a younger son; a colonel in the army, who thought a man provided handsomely for his offspring when he bought a commission in the Guards.

But Captain Dunstan was not of the same opinion; expensive in his habits, thoughtless and extravagant in his ideas, the gaming table, the turf, and the dice-box supplied him with

temporary resources. His father, after having paid his debts half a dozen times, refused to do anything more for him, and soon after died, leaving him, according to the *technical* expression, "without a farthing in the world," i. e. with about three hundred a year.

Dunstan was advised to marry an heiress, which he was perfectly willing to do. After one or two disappointments in England, he received an invitation from a General Campbell, who had been a friend of his father, to spend the shooting season at Cumlin-Dhu, a beautiful romantic place in the Highlands. Thither Harry Dunstan proceeded, and was warmly welcomed on account of his great merit, in having possessed so amiable a father.

Amongst the inmates of the General's hospitable house, was a nephew of his, Archie

Campbell; a gay, warm-hearted young Scotchman, blunt in his manner, but with acute feelings, kind to a fault, the idol of his circle, and the admiration even of the calculating and heartless Dunstan himself. A sort of friendship, or more properly companionship, was established between the two young men; and in spite of the contrast between them, they became inseparable.

Archie Campbell, who had scarcely ever been from the wilds in which he lived, was struck with the natural and acquired elegance of the English officer, for Harry Dunstan had no dandyism about him; gentle without effeminacy, graceful without affectation, he won easily on the unsuspecting; and a sort of tact, which was taught him partly by his dependent situation, partly by an innate thirst of vanity

which led him to wish for universal praise, gave him that enviable power of adapting himself to different dispositions, and chameleon-like variety in the choice of the *modes* of making an impression, which would have baffled a keener-sighted man than his simple, happy friend. From the old general, who found an apparently eager companion in his favourite sports, to the piper, whose account of St. Fillan's meeting, and its prize pipes, was so kindly listened to, all loved Dunstan.

And *one* more loved him; one who should rather have allowed her young heart to wither in her bosom, for Archie Campbell had wooed her, and Archie's bride she was to be. It was a settled thing: and many of her privileged friends already laughingly addressed her by the title of Mrs. Campbell, of Cumlin-Dhu;

and Mrs. Campbell she might have been, but for Harry Dunstan.

Archie himself introduced his friend to his betrothed; it was *he* who expressed a wish that they should like one another; it was *he* who requested Harry to take care of Minny and her Highland pony, while he himself went to see a sick old man, or give directions about the General's farm; it was *he* who informed Dunstan that the only delay to the match was the return of Minny's uncle, who was to give her a fortune hardly earned in India, and had wished to see his beloved child by adoption united to the man of her choice. The father was only a poor clergyman, and his brother's return was daily expected.

Dunstan heard and pondered, and while he sat on the sunny bank, with the blue sky

reflected in the uplifted eyes of his innocent companion, dark and treacherous thoughts coursed one another through his mind. While he wove harebells for Margaret Dure's fair locks, and she smiled on him in confiding friendship, he was meditating how to cover the innocent victim with chains, whose links should be concealed among flowers, till they were bound round her heart!

It were vain and useless to recount Harry Dunstan's acts; he was thirty—she seventeen; he was a man of the world—she had never been beyond her native village. She admired him; she liked to have him with her; she looked forward to happy days at Cumlin-Dhu, with her husband Archie, and her new friend; then she wished that Archie was like Dunstan, *in some things*, till—till Harry Dunstan

seemed to her the most perfect of human beings.

And think not that this was mere fickleness, or admiration of outward show. Dunstan had laid his plot deeply; he contrived by a thousand stratagems to weaken the bonds of affection between the two lovers; and while he appeared to be earnestly wishing to reconcile their quarrels, and to laugh at their childish differences, as he called them, he inwardly exulted as the barbed dart sunk deeper and deeper into the bosoms of those who unwittingly cherished a serpent.

Archie Campbell was in the daily habit of riding to the manse, and taking what he laughingly termed his "orders for the day," from the gentle lips of his betrothed. He rode out one morning while the grey mists still clung to

the tops of the hills, as if loth to leave them to the glory of the uprisen sun. The freshness and brightness of nature gave warmth to his heart and vigour to his limbs; and a kindly and remorseful spirit stole over him as he reflected on some hasty and jealous words he had spoken to Minny the day previous. "What a weak thing is a man's soul!" thought he; "I struggle with doubts and fears which at one time wring my heart, while at another they seem as easily dispersed as the shadows and mists from the brow of yonder mountain. At this hour of quiet glory,—in the dewy silence of this delicious morning,—how feverish, how foolish, seem the feelings of yesterday! My poor Minny, what could make me doubt you now?"

What, indeed!—As he approached the manse

it appeared to him that there was an unusual stir—an unusual number of people assembled on the little lawn from which Minny used to watch his coming: his heart beat, his breath came quick, the old man must be ill, or the housekeeper had died suddenly, or the Indian uncle had arrived, or — anything but Minny! Mr. Dure was standing on the lawn; his white head uncovered, and his eyes wandering irresolutely from one to another of the grieved and perplexed countenances of his little household.

When he perceived Archie he staggered forward, and with a nervous laugh, which contrasted thrillingly with the wild anxiety of his eye as he pressed young Campbell's hand, exclaimed—"Weel, laddie, and isn't this a wild trick you've played us, so sober and discreet

as you seemed; weel, weel — and where?" The old man's tone suddenly altered; the haggard smile vanished from his face, and as he leaned heavily on Archie's arm, he whispered in a hoarse voice—"Don't say it, don't say it; don't tell me you don't know where she is, or may be ye'll see me die at your feet." Archie collected from the weeping domestics enough, and more than enough to satisfy him. The snowy coverlet of Minny's bed remained undisturbed by the pressure of a human form. She had not slept at the manse that night; she would never more rest her head in peace and innocence beneath its roof again!

He came back to Cumlin-Dhu, and asked for Dunstan; he had departed suddenly on plea of urgent business in England. Archie Campbell gazed in his informant's face with a vacant

stare, and then bowed his head on his hands. He did not weep or groan, or even sigh; a slight shudder only passed over his frame. I anxiously watched him the few succeeding days we were together; he was just the same as usual; he talked and laughed, and though the laugh was less cheerful, it was wonderful how well he conquered his sorrow; only when he sometimes stole a look at Dunstan's unfilled place, a wild and fearful expression lighted his countenance, his lips moved, and his breath came thick and short. For a little while I thought he would either get over it, or that he retained some hope that Minny herself would repent before it was too late, and return. He rode out at the accustomed hour to the manse, where the lonely old father was mourning in silent and submissive sorrow.

I accidentally encountered him one evening; he was sitting on the favourite bank—the deep crimson sun lit the heath and harebell, the wide blue lake lay stretched beneath, and the perfumed air echoed the confused murmur of distant sounds and the hum of insects; he looked at the empty seat by him, “Minny, sweet Minny!” said he, in a low gentle voice, then suddenly rising, with startling energy he stretched his arms and bent forward with a straining effort to the distant mountains: “Margaret! Margaret Dure!” and the hills returned in the same tone of unspeakable anguish “Margaret Dure!” I feared he would fall and be dashed to pieces on the shingles below, yet I dared not speak, hardly breathe; he slowly drew himself back and sank down—that night he heard of Minny’s marriage with

Dunstan; that night he swore to me to leave Britain and travel for a while till his health should improve.

He went abroad, and after a few months Mr. Dure received a letter from him, the handwriting was feeble and the style incoherent; it expressed a wish that, as he was dying in a foreign land without any probability of being able to return, Mr. Dure should have a small marble slab erected under the old cypress tree, with his name and age, and the year he died in. This was accordingly done. In little more than a year after her marriage, Margaret Dunstan was attacked by a complaint which had often threatened her—that canker-worm of the young and lovely, consumption. Dunstan, disappointed in his hopes of money by his grieved and angry uncle, had latterly treated

her coldly if not harshly; yet it was impossible to see any thing so young and so beautiful dying without some feelings of pity; after a vain course of remedies had been gone through, he acceded to her sorrowful prayer, that he would take her back to die at Cumlin-Dhu, where her old father still lived.

They arrived late in the evening, and, worn and exhausted, Margaret felt that she could not go to the manse that night; she had not heard of Archie's death in the stranger land and of his last request; and she stole into the churchyard where she was so soon to rest, and sat down in the still twilight, leaning her weary head against a tombstone."

She had not sat there many minutes before she heard the little gate open, and presently afterwards her own name was uttered in a low

voice. "Here I am, Dunstan," said she rising. The speaker darted forward and then stood transfixed to the spot—"Margaret Dure!"—she uttered a piercing shriek. "Minny," said the young man wildly, "do not fear *me*, it is only Archie Campbell; are you living, and is it only the moonlight that makes you so pale?"

"Oh, Archie! do not speak in that tone; we are both altered, and I am dying now, but I deserved it, and I am contented to leave this world, and when I am buried in this lone place you will think of me sometimes, and forgive me."

"Minny, I hope you will live many long years, and I will see you sometimes at night, for I must be dead to all but you. Tell me, is he, is Dunstan kind to you?"

“Can the treacherous in friendship be faithful in love? no, Archie, the red gold tempted him, not Minny’s face; he has chid me for smiling, and reproached me for leaving you, and said it was for a more splendid life I went with him; and—and that if I changed once I might change again; and he has chid me for weeping when I thought of my father and of you, Archie, and of the sweet banks of Cumlin-Dhu.”

“And did you think of me, my sweet Minny? Did you think of me still amid all the temptations and pleasures of England?”

“Archie, after the dream that he loved me melted away, love went out of my heart; but night and day, through the melancholy spring and the long weary summer, I wept for you—for your kind words and faithful promises;

for the long happy days we spent together; and I felt that it was just that I who forsook should be forsaken."

Archie Campbell rushed forward, and taking the unfortunate girl in his arms he strained her convulsively to his bosom. "What have I done?" said Margaret, as she disengaged herself; "oh, Archie, pity me and let me go *home*;" and the word brought a fresh torrent of bitter tears to her already dim and swollen eyes.

"Fear nothing," said he, as his arm sank by his side; "I am no traitor—God Almighty and Allmerciful bless and protect you; go, and, Minny, tell no one you have seen me:" he loosed her hand and walked quickly away, and his bewildered companion returned to her husband.

After a most distressing scene between Minny and her poor father, it was agreed that they should live at the manse till something else should be settled, or till Minny should get better; though Mr. Dure felt he never could like Dunstan, yet his first fears had not been realised, his daughter was married; and though it was a grievous thing to think on poor Archie, his old favourite, yet he was a man prone to forgive, and he left vengeance to Him who hath said "*Vengeance is mine.*" The minister gently told his daughter the fate of her betrothed and deserted lover; she listened intently, and remembering the scene of the night before, she said earnestly, "Are you sure? oh, I cannot believe he is dead."

She shuddered as she said this; her father calmly drawing her arm within his, and walked

through his little garden and entered the church-yard at the end of it." "There," said he mournfully, "is the stone I raised to him." Minny looked, though her head swam.

THIS STONE
IS ERECTED TO THE MEMORY
OF
ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL,
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE,
AGED 24,
MAY 6TH, 1825.

It was the stone on which she had been leaning the night before; she gave a wild scream and fainted; her body, weakened as it was, was terribly shaken by this adventure, and though she still hoped some wild chance

might have preserved Archie, and that it was indeed he that stood by her and spoke to her that evening, yet the awful words, "*I will see you at NIGHT, for I must be dead to all but you,*" rang in her ear, and his hand, she remembered, was very cold. A sick thrill passed over her as she remembered this, and she at length became persuaded she had seen the spirit of her lover. Meanwhile she grew weaker and weaker every day.

One evening she expressed a wish to visit once more the moss bank which overhung the lake. Dunstan had gone out shooting, and it was on his way home. The old servant at the manse supported her, for she was now too feeble to walk without assistance; she sat down in the accustomed spot, dark overhanging mountains behind her, and the quiet blue lake

before her; towards sun-set she saw Dunstan coming over the hill, he waved his handkerchief to her and she answered the signal; he leaped down the tufted side of the hill till he came to the most dangerous part, where it rose almost perpendicularly from the lake.

“Come slowly, Dunstan, pray,” said the alarmed wife; Harry Dunstan laughed at her fears: he made one step more and was arrested in his progress. A wild, gaunt form sprung upon him like an hungry wolf, and endeavoured to hurl him down the precipice; Dunstan struggled as those struggle, and those *only*, who have death present to their eyes, but in vain; nearer he was dragged to the edge, till there was nothing between him and the lake below but a space of about four feet, by a sudden effort he flung himself on his back,

and fired his loaded gun, his opponent bounded a few steps backward, the leaves over which he rolled rustled in the descent—a sick faint scream from Margaret, and all was silent.

Minny Dunstan walked feebly forward, her husband descended the hill, every fibre quivering with the struggle he had made; they met beside the body of the wounded man. Margaret bent over him, he opened his eyes, gave a dim dreary glance round him, took Dunstan's hand, and raising his eyes to heaven, murmured some indistinct words; he then turned them once more to Minny, a film came over those orbs, and he lay a corse before them—the corse of Archie Campbell! Worn and emaciated by suffering, and looking like a man who had passed many more years of sorrows, the noble-hearted youth lay cold and stiff

before his treacherous friend.—And it seemed to Dunstan afterwards that his marriage, the death of Archie, the more lingering illness of Minny, and the sorrow and misery he had brought on all, were but as a warning dream.

THE TWO HARPS.

THE TWO HARPS.

I.

AND dost thou say my heart is cold,
Because thine eye cannot discover,
(As round its jealous glance is rolled
On glittering crowds,) one welcome lover?
And dost thou think I cannot love
Because *thy* suit my lips reprove?

II.

Oh ! valueless the wind-harp's tone
Which swept by summer's careless breezes,
Gives forth a wild uncertain moan,
As often as the zephyr pleases.
Who marks its faint and ceaseless sigh ?
Once heard, it hath no melody.

III.

But when the stricken lyre, which long
Hath hung upon the wall decaying,
Breathes out its soul of love and song,
Obedient to the minstrel's playing ;
And to its master's touch alone
Responds with fond and plaintive tone :

IV.

Then, *then*, the power of music breaks
The spell that bound our calmer feeling,
And every slumbering passion wakes
In answer to its wild appealing :
Till our swoln hearts, too full for words,
Die trembling on those quivering chords.

V.

Years bring no change.—Even though we stand
Where cold the minstrel's form is lying,
Fancy shall see that skilful hand
Once more among the sweet strings flying ;
And music's floating notes shall come,
To mock the silence of his tomb !

VI.

And many an hour, and many a day,
 Shall memory please herself by bringing
Small scattered fragments of the lay
 That hung upon that wild harp's ringing ;
Though summer breeze caress in vain,
And soulless hands awake no strain.

VII.

Even so the heart, that sad and cold
 Warms not beneath thy careless wooing,
Hath known love's power in days of old,
 And worshipped—to its own undoing ;
And many a passion, quiet now,
Hath glowed upon my faded brow.

VIII.

And still perchance the day may come,
When, from its halls of silence taken,
That heart, in its deserted home,
To life and love and joy shall waken :
It hath the music at command—
But *thine* is not the master's hand !

LINES.

I.

I LOVED thee,—in the days of youth,
When hope set out with eagle wing
To seek some warm heart's changeless truth,
To share my life's sweet wandering.
I loved—and deemed that *thou* would'st be
A resting place of hope to me !

II.

I loved thee, in the noon of life,
When all *thy* heart was given to fame,
And smiled, when victor in the strife,
They shouted loud thy welcome name.
I smiled—and loved—for then I thought
My patient love thy love had bought !

III.

Ah ! triumph not, if even now
In the dim evening of my days,
My sunken cheek and faded brow
Flush at the mem'ry of thy gaze ;
And like a scorched up flower in rain
My withered hopes bloom out again !

IV.

The waters which some careless hand

Hath spilled, may never gathered be ;

But from the barren spot of land

They moistened, springs the verdant tree :—

So in that lone love's wasted truth

Lives all the freshness of my youth !

THE TWO PICTURES.

THE TWO PICTURES.

PICTURE I.

HE sits by his deserted hearth

With gloomy brow and cheerless gaze,

And sends his grieving spirit forth

To muse on unforgotten days :

A little child comes stealing up,

And looks into its father's face ;

What can have changed that father so,

That he should shrink from its embrace ?

II.

He shrinks away, and gazes still
Upon the embers' dying glare ;
What doth he see, that grieving man,
That he should fix his glances there ?
He sees a young and timid girl
Standing close to her mother's side.
He sees a young and glowing cheek,
Which a bridal veil seems half to hide.

III.

He sees the bright familiar face
Which with such radiant pleasure smiled
When, welcom'd with a proud embrace,
He clasped and blest his first-born child.
He sees a lip, whose chilling words
Have turned his very soul to gall—
And oh ! the visioned face and form
Is still the same, alas ! in all !

IV.

The little child hath stol'n away
To the far corner of the room,
And with a quiet sadness there
Watches him through the deepening gloom,
And wonders where the soothing voice,
That sounded music to his ears,
And where the gentle hand can be,
That used to dry his infant tears.

V.

And sees, but dares not touch, the lute
That lies close by his father's feet ;
And sighs for many a merry tune,
And loving words, almost as sweet :
The merry music, whose dear sounds,
Measured his dancing steps of joy ;
While his young mother sang and smiled,
Or paused to kiss her happy boy.

VI.

The little child hath named a name
Which makes his father groan and start—
Tears gather in his infant eyes,
And wondering grief is in his heart ;
Alas ! the present hour but brings
Fond memory of his mother's songs ;
The shrouded future brings, too soon,
The knowledge of his father's wrongs.

PICTURE II.

WEARILY, wearily slumbers she,
While the morning rises bright and glad ;
And they dare not break that heavy sleep,
For her waking hours are always sad.
But in her sleep she smiles, for lo !
A vision stands beside her there ;
A little face she knows full well,
With bright blue eyes and golden hair.

II.

With bright blue eyes and golden hair
Whereon the sunbeams glittering lie ;
Bidding good morrow to her ear,
And bringing gladness to her eye.
And still, through long and changeful years
That vision to her rest shall come ;
Nor alter from the laughing child
She left in her unhappy home.

III.

She starts—and wakes—and turns away
From the blue light and glorious sun,
As memory flashes on her mind
The deed that cannot be undone.
Wild love, which, sinfully avowed,
Hath made the misery of both ;
And vows which mocked the offended God,
Who registered her earlier oath.

IV.

But she *had* wrongs—her heart hath felt
The bitter wound of taunting words ;
And she strives to think them over now—
While merrily chirp the morning birds.
Alas ! those cruel tones and looks
On which her conscience vainly built !
Her memory cannot call them back,
To make excuses for her guilt.

V.

But ever in their stead she hears
The prayer that won her youthful heart ;
And her mother's low voice teaches her
To act the wife and mother's part.
Oh ! holy dreams—oh ! happy days,
When sin was far—and guilt and shame —
When the calm evening closed in prayer,
And gladness with the morning came.

VI.

It comes no more. The haunting thoughts

Of those bright days are round her now ;

While all that *was* a gladness, brings

A darker shadow to her brow.

And he the father of her child—

That child of mother's love bereft—

Oh weigh your wrongs—rash, angry hearts—

She turns—and weeps for him she *left*.

SONG OF THE IRISH PEASANT
WIFE.

SONG OF THE IRISH PEASANT
WIFE.

I.

COME, Patrick, clear up the storms on your brow ;
You were kind to me once—will you frown on me now ?
Shall the storm settle *here* when from Heaven it
 departs ;
And the cold from without find its way to our hearts ?
No, Patrick, no, surely the wintriest weather
Is easily borne—while we bear it together !

II.

Though the rain's dropping through from the roof to
the floor,

And the wind whistles free where there once was a
door ;

Can the rain, or the snow, or the storm wash away

All the warm vows we made in love's early day ?

No, Patrick, no, surely the dark stormy weather

Is easily borne—so we bear it together !

III.

When you stole out to woo me, when labour was done,

And the day that was closing to us seemed begun,—

Did we care if the sunset was bright on the flowers,

Or if we crept out amid darkness and showers ?

No, Patrick, we talked while we braved the wild
weather

Of all we could bear—if we bore it together.

IV.

Soon, soon, will these dark dreary days be gone by,
And our hearts be lit up with a beam from the sky :
Oh ! let not our spirits, embittered with pain,
Be dead to the sunshine that comes to us then :
Heart in heart—hand in hand—let us welcome the
 weather,
And, sunshine or storm, we will bear it together !

CURIOUS CUSTOMS
IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

CURIOUS CUSTOMS
IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

CHAPTER I.

THE INVISIBILITY OF LONDON HUSBANDS.

TRAVELS and voyages are a favourite lecture with a large portion of the world. Every man who has been anywhere, prints a series of letters supposed to have been previously written to a confidential friend who never existed,

describing his own adventures in foreign countries, together with the manners and customs of the inhabitants of those countries. Cawthorn, Ebers, Andrews, Churton, all have their doors besieged, and their libraries filled, by a clamorous multitude possessed with a wish to peruse the new work. The new work is perused—its author is asked to dinner, and very much stared at—and one third of the English population are edified by learning that the inhabitants of Loo-Choo wear pins stuck in a row through their underlips, or that the ladies' slippers at Aleppo are half an inch longer, and more curled at the toe, than the ladies' slippers of Constantinople ; that the royal bride at Hi tong ti (in the South Sea) is not allowed to receive any friends till an heir is born to the Prince, her husband ; or that the muleteers' wives, in Spain, have little bells

in their ears precisely similar to those worn by the mules.

“ I am reading Stuart’s America,” exclaims a juvenile blue, whose left hand rests on a volume of “ The Buccaneers,” while a suspicious pink-papered book, peeping from under the sofa pillow, betrays at once the ease with which she reads three books at a time, and her intimate acquaintance with “ the manners and customs ” of French Society, as pourtrayed by Paul le Kock.

(It is thought wiser, and more intellectual, to be occupied with the manners and customs of distant lands than with those of our own, or some neighbouring kingdom). Yet *I*, who have never been out of Old England—who stare respectfully at the man who has journeyed over the Himalaya mountains—eaten camels’ humps

—or even taken a sketch of Florence from the Chisea dal Monte—I who never travelled farther than from London to Edinburgh, have often groaned at the ignorance in which half the population of England and Scotland exist, with regard to the “manners and customs” of the other moiety.

Thanks to the works of the talented and unfortunate Banim—the O’Hara Tales—and some other less powerful sketches of Irish life—thanks to the incessant broils, murders, complaints, newspaper reports, and parliamentary committees, we have a tolerable guess at the ‘ways’ of the upper and lower orders of the Irish; but I believe I stood on entirely unexplored ground when I compiled an ingenious work, entitled “Curious Customs in the County of Middlesex.”

This was a work of great labour, which it had taken years of patient research to compile. My disappointment was, therefore, extreme, when a smiling and somewhat contemptuous refusal was returned by every bookseller to whom I offered it. Evidently, they did not believe there *were* any curious customs in the county of Middlesex!! I am not easily discouraged—I am loth to lose entirely the reward of my toils. I have, therefore, chosen a few extracts from the manuscript volume, and should they be so fortunate as to meet with attention, I shall be glad to receive subscriptions to publish the whole work.

The first singularity on my list is the invisibility of London husbands, which struck me forcibly on my introduction into what is termed *good society*. In the country (where I have

chiefly resided), man and wife are *one* to a certain degree ; they have one home, one set of apartments, and are generally to be found in each other's society. If they pay a morning visit, the door is flung open, and Mr. and Mrs. so and so duly announced—if a morning visit is paid to *them*—they may be found in the same sitting room, the man lounging on the sofa reading the newspaper, the woman working at a little table ; or, perhaps, if the lady has delicate health, *she* occupies the sofa, and the gentleman contents himself with an arm chair, and the society of two large dogs.

If they give a little dance, or an evening party, the invitations are made out in the mutual names of husband and wife ; and should one of the guests be unacquainted with the gentleman,

he is immediately led up to his host with the simple preface, "This is Mr. Tomkins, my dear, of whom I spoke to you last Thursday."

In London, on the contrary, I have often spent an evening in a man's house, where not only I was not introduced, but I have inquired of at least ten of the guests, and not one has been able to inform me which was the master of the house; "I believe it is that man talking to lady Sinclair;" or, "I am sure I don't know unless it was the man who sat playing whist in the further room;" or, "I don't know him by sight, but I'll ask Unwin"—are among the most satisfactory of the replies made to my requests for information.

Even the very card of invitation is a blank, with respect to the owner of the mansion where the entertainment is to be given. "Lady

Altonbury, at home—dancing.” “Mrs. Dense Hamperall, at home—early.” “La Princesse Carovitzen prie Monsieur —— de venir passer la soirée chez elle—Lundi 12;” such are the cards at this moment on my table.

Yet there is a tall handsome noble-looking elderly gentleman, known by the title of Lord Altonbury—there is a singularly fat stupid bustling Mr. Dense Hamperall, and Prince Carovitzen is an ambassador plenipotentiary ! I remember being in danger of a duel in consequence of having supposed pretty Mrs. Finch a widow, and finding Finch at my elbow, just as I declared my passion ; and I once stood aghast at the rudeness of a well-looking man, who, at one of the accomplished Lady Loiter’s réunions (which was filling very slowly), exclaimed, “By Jove these soirées are *too* stupid till the rooms

fill; I shall go away and spend an hour at the club, or at lady Jane Loch's music party, and come back again." Upon inquiry, I found it was Lord Loiter who thus commented on the réunions in his own rooms.

In the country a couple walk together, or perchance the worthy husband drives his mate in a pony chaise; but who ever thinks of asking a London husband to drive in the open barouche or britchka up and down the park? The divine law says that man and wife are one, the English law says that all property (with exceptions, for which I refer my readers to Blackstone,) is the husband's; but who does not know that the law of custom is stronger than either the divine law or the laws of Great Britain? That a London husband is only a visiter in the drawing-room of his own house; is seldom if ever admitted into

the 'boudoir;' and has no more right to a corner of his wife's opera box, or a place in her carriage, than any other gentleman of her acquaintance—indeed less; for while the law of custom pronounces it proper and natural that Captain Altonby and young Mowbray of the Blues should have opera tickets in the evening, and be allowed to ride with their white gloves on the carriage side all the morning, the same law pronounces it strange, vulgar, and suspicious, if the husband leads his wife to supper at a ball, or appears as her companion on any public occasion*.

* And here I may remark, that so perfect is the obedience paid to this law, that I have occasionally seen a young couple, (just united, and really preferring each other's society to that of strangers) glance shyly across a brilliant *salon*, afraid and ashamed to show their preference by sitting near one another; and I have sighed to think how the world's corruption would eat, like the worm in the

I once was very anxious to see the husband of a very beautiful woman whom I had known as a girl, who had married entirely to please herself, and was supposed to be a very happy and a very good wife (as London wives go). I called upon her two or three times a week; I went to all her soirées, I had a ticket for the season to her opera box; I occasionally joined her in Kensington Gardens, (for it was before the popularity of the Elephant and lesser stars at the Zoological Gardens,) in short I was a most intimate friend; and yet it was exactly two months and four days before I saw her husband!

Sometimes I used to watch her laughing eye, for the expression of sadness and anxiety I

flower, till their hearts were hollow, and the bloom of their young lives for ever departed.

fancied such neglect must cause ; or listened when she spoke, for that sudden tone of sharp misery which, in spite of attempted merriment, *will* sometimes strike on the ear like a funeral knell on a summer's day, and tell of wasted life, and blasted hopes, and innocent mirth departed. But nothing of this could I ever discover, only one day, when I was, as usual, admitted, a little knock was heard at the boudoir door, and a gentleman walked in with an open letter in his hand, and bowing slightly to me, addressed my fair friend thus. “ Georgina, I have just heard from my agent, who tells me Sedley House is burnt to the ground : ” to which the lady responded, “ Good heavens ! our pretty, pretty place ! the place where we spent our honey moon ! ” *Our*—and *honey moon* : it was the London husband I had been wishing to see.

I trust, while I make these remarks, that I offend no one. I trust that no pencilled brow is bending, frowningly, over the page, disapproving of my comments, and highly approving of a London life. I trust that no unhappy husband (who heartily wishes himself unmarried again, that he might obtain a little more of his wife's notice, and groans in that worst species of slavery, admiration for a woman who does not care about him), I say I trust that none such are probed and galled by my observations.

Let me assure both parties that I am neither condemning, nor am I eulogising the custom of keeping asunder those whom God hath joined. I have no settled opinion on the subject; on the contrary, I think the invisibility of London husbands is a subject admitting of much controversial argument. As thus : it is certain that

all the old-established code on the subject of matrimony is founded on the superior intelligence, wisdom, and perfectibility, supposed to distinguish the male sex, and which I devoutly believe really did distinguish Adam, and made it proper that the first couple should be as Milton describes:—

He for God only—she for God *in him*.

But men are sadly degenerate, and even the pious composers of the marriage ceremony would allow, that it is difficult, if not impossible, for the woman to love one who constantly neglects or ill treats his helpmate; to honour a fool, a gamester, and a liar—to obey one whose commands seem more the result of temporary insanity than of reason and judgment, or for the man to love and cherish a creature, whose soul

is in her looking glass, and whose pledged hand is oftener clasped in that of some whispering coxcomb than in his own; and if the husband does not love or cherish, and the wife neither loves, honours, nor obeys, is it not better that two people, mutually repugnant to each other, should live as much apart as the law of custom will allow? This is in favour of the *invisibility* of London husbands.

On the other hand it is certain, that women are affectionate by nature, and easily won by kindness—that attention without jealousy—indulgence without carelessness—firmness without tyranny—will change an indifferent or reluctant bride into a devoted and excellent wife. It is also certain that appearing to care about your wife, prevents other men from showing how much *they* care about her. She is

spared some temptations, and experiences none of that emptiness of heart which makes any excitement seem happiness, like the visions of an opium eater. This in favour of the *visibility* of London husbands.

Alas ! for the marriage ceremony !—alas ! for the rules of right and wrong ! The pure and simple laws which our fathers framed were made for pure and simple days, when young heart met young heart, and melted into one, and people married because they preferred one another to the whole world.

[Help me, Miss Martineau ! What is there in improvement and civilisation which so roughens the road of life, by placing heaps of gold in one place, and blank poverty in another ? Help me, Miss Martineau ! What is there in the present state of society which obliges young

women to marry, as the easiest and most dignified manner of procuring a subsistence, and makes young men eager about heiresses, in order to discharge debts contracted on the turf? To you, dear Madam, with your clear head and feeling heart, I leave these puzzling points, while simply keeping to my own subject, I affirm, that whatever may be the cause of interested marriages, it is because they *are* made that the invisibility of London husbands is become the law of custom.

The greater part are not together as companions and helpmates, they are together because thirst of rank or riches, ambition or pique have joined them; and they mutually rejoice in the law that allows them mutual liberty; the man to visit his mistress or his club, the woman to flirt behind a little red curtain crossed with gilt

wires, with a man perfectly indifferent to her, or guiltily loved.

But one other observation strikes me at this moment. Why (under all the circumstances) are the ladies of the invisible husbands so terribly alarmed and shocked if forced into a momentary contact with late made wives, who, conscious of early error, cling sensitively to their husband's arm as the link between them and respectability?

There are laws besides the laws of fashion, there is a tribunal beyond that of "the world." What if they should differ? What if it should be found after the glitter hath passed away, and the shadow of death is come and gone, that "God judgeth not as man judgeth?"

CHAPTER II.

PUBLIC PRINTS AND PRIVATE CHARACTERS.

THE next singularity on my list is thus headed; and surely a most curious custom it is, (and one which has crept in within the memory of our own generation) to make private affairs and private individuals subjects (and prettily dissected they sometimes are) for the columns of pages professedly addressing themselves to the reading public of Great Britain!

When the Spectator, the Rambler, and the Guardian were given to the world, it was with the avowed principle of endeavouring to amend the vices and lessen the follies of that day by grave rebuke or sprightly ridicule, as the occasion might seem to require. Characters were drawn to pourtray the faults of a class, not the peculiarities of an individual. Satire was permitted, to give zest to the censure of wise men, not to secure the indulgence of personal rancour, or to obtain the ephemeral popularity of being the first to circulate tales of scandal. And, lastly, if an individual example *was* given, it was one marked, glaring prominent; one which all recognised even under the feigned name in which delicacy and good feeling masked the man while they blamed his vices: one, which all felt was intended as a lesson

for them to profit by, not a theme for scurrilous jests or bitter malice.

How different, thought I, as I closed a volume of the Spectator and looked round the dark quiet library, “how different is the present custom in the county of Middlesex.” The delicacy that would conceal names—the indul-
 gence that would spare feelings—where are they? Let the echo by the Arabian well send its reply! Personalities which disgust even the most eager among the lovers of fashionable gossip—allusions which startle friends—falsehoods which embitter enemies! these are the “food for the mind” administered through the medium of some of the public prints. Nor is it “great news; good news! glorious news!” that is thus furnished: it is not the patriot, the statesman, the soldier, whose names are

as it were a part of their country's possessions, who are thus brought before the public eye; but persons of whom we can only say,

We wonder how the devil they got there!

It is sufficient that a man should spur his horse to a sharper pace than is ordinary through the park; that a woman should have a few diamonds more or less than her equals in rank and fortune, to make them fair game.

Home is no longer a sanctuary, nor a private existence in a man's own power; the character of the mother of a family is about as safe as the life of a brooding dove from a hungry hawk who has spied her; the name of her child may be bandied about coupled with a coarse jest or a lying report. We may wonder what first attracted the "notice of the

press," (we have taken a great deal of trouble about the source of the Nile), and how they "began to be talked about," but we wonder in vain: all we know is, that there they *are*, and there they will be, till they are fairly run to earth, or till the dogs are drawn off the scent by other game.

The law of libel is a curious and interesting subject, and I recommend it to the study of such of my readers as have leisure for the consideration of its technicalities. They will then see that gross misrepresentations, calumnies, and foul lies may be printed, sufficiently clear to part friends and ruin happiness, which are yet *not* sufficiently clear to be made tangible by the law of libel.

In a case like this, it sometimes happens, that when a man has read what brings the

cold sickness to his heart, and the quivering curse to his dry lips, he crushes the paper in his hand, strikes his forehead, and forms a hurried plan of vengeance. *He* communicates with a friend, or with five or six friends, and they, *in consequence of something that is told them*, (to use the phrasology of a court of justice,) all sally forth, all armed with canes, (editors are formidable people) and they then and there heartily thrash, cuff, beat, and otherwise maltreat *the editor*, who never probably wrote one line of the obnoxious paragraph: he, finding the law of assault much more straight forward and simple in its operations than the law of libel, extracts from the pockets of his assailants, a compensation for the injuries inflicted, and so the matter ends.

On the other hand, should the printed lie

actually hold good as a libel *in law*, the enthusiastic and injured peruser of the paper, spends his last farthing on a successful prosecution, and procures the imprisonment of the printer and publisher, who probably never even *read* what the editor never *wrote*, and what neither of the worthy gentlemen ever contemplated being caned or incarcerated for. It is fabled of the asp, that for its poison there is no *real remedy*.

The first instance of newspaper oppression which came under my own observation, and the one which indelibly fixed this curious custom in my memory, was the case of a widowed lady, a friend of mine. Her husband a distinguished military officer, had left her with one child, a daughter, whose sole inheritance consisted in a well-known name and hereditary beauty.

For this beloved child the widow toiled, and watched, and lived. For *her* sake the loveliness which might still have charmed was shrouded in seclusion; for *her* sake privations were borne unrepiningly, and sacrifices made cheerfully; for *her* sake luxuries which others deemed necessities were relinquished, that the most expensive and careful education might be afforded. And for *her* sake only the anxious parent at length once more sought the society of “the world.” Gentle, and pure, and lovely, the orphan girl was seen and admired even by those to whom gentleness, and grace and beauty, were familiar things; and the name of the beautiful Cecilia D—— obtained the temporary celebrity which in London is so soon and so capriciously accorded.

One morning I went to visit my widowed

friend, and found her weeping bitterly. I was the more affected, because her usual manner was grave and calm even in the hour of trial and difficulty.

I pressed her for an explanation, and to my infinite surprise a paper was pushed towards me with the words, "Oh, Mr. Carleton, what has my child done to deserve that."

I read the passage she pointed to—coarse lines on a coarse subject, headed "by Miss Cecilia D——." I urged every species of consolation, and could not help marvelling as I walked down St. James's Street to my club, what could be the motive of this attack upon the feelings of the widow and the orphan. Did those who planned the jest and penned the lines, *really* intend that the five or six hundred families who took in this paper, should believe

that the article had been written by a young and innocent girl? Or did they merely please themselves in the anticipation of being able, through the medium of the press, to startle and mortify one to whom they could not personally address rude or bitter speeches? Or was it that the greedy eye might dwell on their columns more eagerly, and the malicious mind advocate the cause of their newspaper more strenuously, as the best of those which professed to give news of the fashionable world? A mystery must all the causes remain which induced the authors of that short paragraph to insult or injure one who had never offended them !

Since then I have become accustomed to the practice of inserting false names in real anecdotes, or inventing anecdotes of real persons ;

I have seen it borne with various degrees of patience—bitterly resented—timidly feared—carelessly laughed at—and, in some few cases, *triumphed in* ; as affording a notoriety not otherwise to be obtained.

Week after week the same names appear, coupled with the same sort of jests, or the same sort of slander ; week after week the dear people in the country continue to read with implicit faith (on Sundays more especially, oh, Sir Andrew Agnew !) the supposed enormities which their town friends are committing, and to feel shocked and pained at the information thus given of their misconduct ; and week after week, and year after year, the patient and industrious readers of the middling class, continue to curse the vices of the aristocracy as

described in their beloved authorities, the public prints, till some tea-drinking old woman in the village next Stansbury Park, declares she wouldn't sit in the same room with Lady Stansbury *after what she has heard of her doings in London*;—till the fussy grocer of some country town thinks himself able to write the life and memoirs of the late member's lady, together with her intrigues with all the celebrated characters of the day; and the shop-keeper volunteers to describe exactly at what gaming-house young Lord Stapleton lost enormous sums, (which are probably still safe in the hands of his bankers), and how many horses he keeps at Melton, (where he has never yet had a single chance of breaking his neck, having only passed through it *once*, asleep in his

dormeuse, on his journey from Jack Barnaby's grouse moors, in Scotland, to his hotel in the city of London).

Alas ! my dear friends, *I* was once as easily gulled as you. *I* used to believe unhesitatingly, that the Duke of Wellington was once refused admittance at Almack's by the haughty lady patroness, because he came at ten minutes past the appointed hour for closing the doors. *I* used to sit on Sunday mornings with hot toast and butter in my mouth, the papers for the day in my hand, and surprise and horror in my mind at what I read there; but I am wiser, and would that I could persuade you of what I am so thoroughly convinced myself, viz., that all these printed reports respecting private individuals are more or less lies; that you are all more or less laughed at for believing

them—and that the collecting, inventing, printing and publishing them, is merely one of the “Curious Customs of the County of Middlesex.”

CHAPTER III.

GREAT LADIES AND LITTLE LADIES.

It has been said, and said truly, that it is difficult to draw the line at which insanity begins. There are so many madnesses which do not come under the head of aberration of intellect! There are oddities, and originalities, and manias, and enthusiasms, and fancies; and a host of other things equally vaguely

named, but clearly understood as meaning something short of the dreaded boundary, passing which, reason is said to be o'erthrown.

The man who shoots himself because the dairy maid won't marry him, is not a madman—he is only “very much attached to the young woman.” The individual who spends all the current coin of the realm that he possesses, in the purchase of old coins of other countries, and bits of Etruscan earthenware, is not mad—he is only “a collector of curiosities.” The sculptor who raves of the Apollo as if he believed in the existence of the imaginary deity whose form is thus represented, or gazes on the unhewn marble till his strained eyes embody some vision of uncreated loveliness—he is not mad—no, poor fellow!—he is only “fond of the art.” The wretch who stakes on

a throw of the dice the sum which beggars his children—ruins his creditors—and consigns himself to a lifelong prison or a suicide's grave, is not accounted insane—he is merely “addicted to the card table.” The soldier in a desperate cause—the patriot in a ruined one—the starved poet—the ghost-seer—the determined inventor of mechanical improvement by which the inventor never benefits, but for which somebody obtains a patent after he has been consigned by the simplest process to the grave—none of these men are mad—they are visionaries, enthusiasts, or what you will, but they are not *mad*.

And if they, who spend their lives, and lose their lives, for imaginary benefits, are not therefore to be accounted insane, neither are we to reckon madness the feelings which

actuate the conduct of the little ladies of London towards the great ladies of the same place.

It would be difficult to explain to the uninitiated in the mysteries of fashion, what can induce some of these "lesser stars" to bear unresentingly every species of mortification which the caprice of the greater may suggest, and to continue as patiently watching for the withheld smiles of an offended lady of ton, as a poor farmer watches for sunshine in the hay season. It is natural to suppose that so much reverent submission on the one part, argues an entire superiority on the other; that the great lady is fairer, more virtuous, better born, better bred, more respected, and more worthy to be respected, than the little lady who so courts her notice : but not so.

The little lady may be a good wife, a fond and careful mother, and the great lady so profligate, that her name is a byword in the mouths of men—the little lady may come of a noble ancestry, and the great lady be an actress's daughter—the little lady may be one who in her own sphere is loved and valued, while the great lady is the jest or loathing even of her own dependants—and yet, such is the power of fashion, that the little lady will conceal her real feelings, and affect false ones;—will sue, petition, and flatter, for the sake of conciliating one who, were she only a country neighbour, with but her faults or virtues to stand or fall by, might be shunned as a dangerous or unworthy associate.

It may be doubted whether many feel as much awe and flutter of the heart while they

kneel to pray for heaven's mercy in God's own temple, as is occasionally felt by some of these worshippers of a false light, when a petition for a ball ticket is sent in, to take its chance of rude refusal or haughty condescension, according to the humour of its capricious reader.

It has been my fate to know one of these great ladies all her life (which is indeed the better part of my own), some thirty or five-and-thirty years; and the surprise and curiosity with which I have watched the various changes of her existence, resembles, I should think, pretty nearly the feelings of some enthusiastic entomologist, occupied with a new species of ephemera.

She had what is termed "every advantage," which includes an Irish countess for a mother,

and a large, or moderately large fortune, to squander at a prescribed time. She was not a beauty, but all heiresses are taught to think themselves so; and fair, fat, and clean-looking, as she really was, it is not to be wondered at, that she at length grew to consider herself an *embonpoint* likeness of the Venus de Medicis.

Her childhood was a neglected one; the “animated batter pudding” (as some one christened her countess mother), being at that time fully occupied with her own enjoyment of the various goods of life, and her handsome father very little inclined to domestic pleasures. Ragged the little Sophy ran about, and ignorant the little Sophy was growing up, when an unexpected widowhood leaving her mother less leisure for the vices and less excuse for the

pleasures of the world, she was suddenly snatched up to be civilised: clean muslin dresses and very stiff backboards, Italian masters and French governesses, were each in turn bestowed upon her; and the Irish countess bethought herself that the attention she herself would hereafter exact from the heiress, might be bought by present attention to the child. The fallacy of human hope is a threadbare subject, and if in after life the spoiled nursling of prosperity included her mother among the cast off companions of her youth, and treated her alternately with cold contempt and impatient haughtiness, whom or what should we blame?

The little Sophy grew up at length—grew up to be a wife and mother—the profligate wife of a weakly indulgent husband—the heartless mother of a race of spoiled and fretful children.

Caressed for a moment—neglected for days—bribed to take medicine by gorgeous presents, or left to die in the nurse's arms.

I watched her when her entrance into the world as a flattered heiress filled her own and her mother's heart with bursting triumph; I watched her when the cold love which habit had created for the intimates or associates of other days, faded before the glare of vanity and self-love; I watched her when the thirst for power made her find a pleasure in mortifying those who had sedulously courted her; and when the same feeling, *baffled*, sharpened her tongue and clouded her brow against those to whom her anger was an amusement, and her influence a subject of speculative curiosity. I watched her as her mother's society, from being irksome, became intolerable; and saw her coldly draw

the pen to mark the names of those who were to be admitted to her assemblies, and leave out the “unloved name” which seemed to be the only one that had a claim to be inserted. I watched her while her extravagance beggared and disgraced her husband, and diamonds and emeralds grew more precious than good name or fair fame ;—while her ruined tradesmen cursed her from their prisons ;—and her rebellious servants insulted her in open words ;—and I watch her still.

Still, as she moves onwards—

From loveless youth, to unrespected age—

I watch the turns of her fate—but while I wait the crash of ruin which may eventually reduce her to comparative obscurity, or the “old age of cards” which is to follow the youth and maturity

of this true London lady—I cannot avoid smiling as I reflect upon what I have seen and known respecting her : to think that this being—this frivolous, heartless, haughty minion of the world, should be caressed, courted, and approached timidly by many a little lady and her pure and pretty daughters, to whom her smiles or frowns are of temporary importance from their position in “the world,”—while I, an old bachelor, am noting their relative careers in my pocket-book as one of the Curious Customs in the County of Middlesex.

THE HAUNTED WOOD OF
AMESOY.

THE HAUNTED WOOD OF AMESOY.

DARK are the woods of Amesoy—
Yet dark with shadow, not with gloom ;
There safely broods the ring-dove coy,
There unseen flow'rets wildly bloom ;
And, all throughout the summer noon,
The echoes with sweet bird-notes ring ;
And when uprises the white moon
The nightingale begins to sing.

It is a scene for vows of love—
For indolent and happy rest—
For studious steps that love to rove—
And Meditation's placid breast :
And in that wood there is a fount
Whose murmuring voice doth never cease,
As up the bubbling waters mount,
To tell of Nature's quiet peace.
You cannot see the clear bright sky,
So thick the branches overhead ;
Nor feel the sunbeam from on high,
That slants across the path we tread.
Yea, all so thickly grow the trees,
Which form that green transparent screen,
That scarce the faint and lagging breeze
Can wave the leaves it creeps between ;
Or send the fountain's showery spray
A little from its downward way.

There, in the dark wood's green recess,
Pressing the moss-encumber'd ground,
Two forms of perfect loveliness,
A lone sweet resting-place had found.
One was a child—a rosy thing,
Joyous and restless all the day,
Pleased with an insect's purple wing,
Or with a broken flower made gay :
And now his small and shining head
Was lying on a lady's knee,
So young and bright, you would have said,
His sister only she could be ;
For childhood's tints were on her cheek,
And childhood's softness on her brow,
And droopingly and darkly meek,
The lashes fringed their lids of snow :
And the light form that there reclined,
With delicately rounded limbs,

(Coming in glimpses on the mind,
As sunshine lights or shadow dims),
Had but the fulness of a flower
When seen at eve the gazer knows,
That long before the morning hour,
The bud will be a rose.

So innocent—so fair she seemed;
As with that fairy child she played,
That those who looked might well have deem'd
The spot some old Arcadian shade,
And the sweet pair beneath that tree,
Innocence guarding Infancy.
But many a sea will wake in storms
That slept in peace the night before —
And waves will brave the rock's proud forms
That crept to kiss the silent shore.
Lo! the meek eyes—the downcast eyes —

In glorious light to yours are lifted,
And as the white lids flashing rise,
Betray a heart with passion gifted :—
Childhood !—ah !—no—'tis *woman's* soul
That beams and brightens through the whole !
They droop—but gone is now the charm,
Which made us think her pure as snow ;
As sunset leaves the twilight warm
With traces of his recent glow,
So that *one* wild and passionate gaze
Hath given a summer to her days,
And cast a shadow on her brow
Which seemed impossible till now.
And as she bends that child above,
We watch her crimson lips the while,
And feel that only *mother's* love
Could wreathe them with that mother's smile.

Yes, she had sinned ; and he who played
Beside her in the greenwood's shade,
Was but the child of guilt and shame.
Without a home—without a name.
And like that mother of the east
Who laid her cradled child to sleep
Upon the water's changeful breast,
And stood aside to watch and weep,
Nor feared its dark and stormy waves,
So much as men who murdered slaves,
So *she* had hid her bright-haired boy
In the dark woods of Amesoy ;
(Lest on his head her brother's ire
Should wreak the doom they owed his sire) ;
And gave him but a watchdog mute
His steps to guard—his looks to scan ;
Nor deemed the instinct of the brute
So cruel as the heart of man ;—
And day by day she sought the wood,

And whistled to the faithful hound,
And safely through the solitude,
Guided by him, her footsteps wound,
Nor to another step he stirs,
Nor answers other voice than hers.

Yes, she had sinned !—How many sin,
Who innocent of heart remain,
Compared with some who feel within
No conscious guilt—no wringing pain :
Nor heed that blackening of the heart—
That withering up of life's pure springs,
Which leaves no sting—no sudden smart,
But slow the gradual ruin brings ;
Till lost to truth and virtue's sway,
We blindly blunder on our way ;
And feel no more the generous woe,
Reproachful, through our bosoms thrill,

But tax our *memory* to know
The lost extremes 'twixt good and ill.

Hers was not guilt to hardness wrought—
Her shadowy brow was fair and meek,
And fleeting blushes, quick as thought,
Chased one another o'er her cheek :—
Nor, like the volcan's lava tides,
Which keep their power of withering death,
While, greenly fresh, its springing sides
Hide the hot heart which burns beneath :
Were the deep sorrows of her breast
Concealed beneath a hollow smile,
Which tells a tale of wild unrest,
Yet cheats the stranger's eye the while.
No ! gentle was she as the reed
That sways beneath each passing wind,
And though she knew the doom decreed

For erring and polluted mind,
Still, even as though she *felt* her soul
Were not all blackened by that sin,
And that the God, whose thunders roll,
Would mark the penitence within :
She knelt and prayed, as never guilt
Prayed when remorse hath brought despair ;
But bowed her weeping head and knelt,
Believing Mercy heard her prayer !
And though her bruised heart, sore and pained,
Of sorrow's cup had learnt to quaff,
Enough of gladness yet remained
To echo back her infant's laugh.

That infant—Heaven shield them now!
What rushing steps are in the glade ?
What hand impatient breaks yon bough ?
What voices shout beneath the shade ?

The slight acacia bends aside
Its trembling boughs and wavering form,
The larch o'erthrown, leaves passage wide—
And yet in heaven there is no storm.
But on the old oak's ruddy bark,
Where the broad sunset glowed till then,
Come fleeting shadows swift and dark,
And trace the forms of hurrying men.
Those men!—What ails the lady now,
That thus she clasps her snowy hands,
While terror damps her marble brow,
And the arched nostril wide expands?
Pantingly the air she drinks,
And her light form trembling shrinks
Close behind the old oak tree,
As she fain would viewless be ;
And round she sends her startled eye,
With a wild bewildered air ;

A glance as sudden, swift, and shy,
As wild bird's wing that glanceth by,
Which cleaves the circle of the sky,
Ere we can say "Look there!"

"Oh, spare him! spare him! brother dear,
He hath not sinned 'gainst heaven or thee;
He owns no guilt—he feels no fear—
But in his young heart's purity,
(Unused to aught but love's caresses—
The tone that soothes—the lip that presses—)
Shrinks not within thine iron hold,
But deems thy grasp a rough embrace,
And heedless of thy dagger cold
Smiles, cruel brother, in thy face!
Oh, gaze upon him, harsh and stern!
His dimpled cheek—his shining hair—
And something of the softness learn,

Which tames the lion in his lair !
'Tis thine own blood thy hand must spill,
To make that breast thy poniard's sheath ;
'Tis thine own life that thou must kill,
To stop that unoffending breath :
Oh, let him live—and never more
Shall I or mine thy sight offend—
Oh, let him live—and Heaven's best store
Of blessings shall the deed attend.
Or, if a victim must be slain,
Brother, sweet brother, let *me* die ;
And thou unclasp my boy again,
In pity to his infancy :
I, who have wildly sued for him
Can, all unmurmuring, bear my fate,
And while mine eyes grow faint and dim,
Will turn from death's eternal gate
Without a sigh—without a groan—

To bless thee for the mercy shown.
And when the one who sinned is gone,
Thy buried love for me shall wake,
And when my boy thou look'st upon,
Thou'lt love him for his mother's sake;
And then, perchance, his brow thou'lt kiss,
And murmuring forth a sigh for me,
Say, 'Just her doom who died—but *this*—
This pledge preserves her memory !' "

Heard'st thou that shriek prolonged and wild ?
It woke the echoes slumbering round—
And the dying moan of a little child
Was mingled in its maddening sound !
Pale mother, hush ! thy wail give o'er—
Life's spark extinguished, glows no more !
And where was he without a name,
Who bowed that fair young head with shame,

And yet whose cold and coward heart
Refused to do a father's part?
Where was he when the strong arms rose
And brothers turned to deadliest foes ;
And cool boughs waved, and blue skies smiled
Upon the murder of his child ?
Far away the salt sea over,
Sails that false and faithless lover—
Calmly smiles and calmly sleeps,
While she deserted sits and weeps—
Calmly views the sunset ray,
That lines with light the glittering wave ;
Nor deems that sunbeam far away,
Shines full upon his infant's grave.

Oh ! man, how different is thy heart,
From hers, the partner of thy lot ;
Who in thy feelings hath no part,

When loves wild charm is once forgot,
What, th' awakening spell shall be,
Thy heart to melt, thy soul to warm,
Or who shall dare appeal to thee
To whom "old days" convey no charm?
When Adam turned from Eden's gate,
His soul in sullen musings slept—
He brooded o'er his future fate,
While Eve—poor Eve—look'd back and wept!—
So man, even while his eager arms
Support some trembling fair one's charms,
Looks forward to vague days beyond,
When other eyes shall beam as fond,
And other lips his own shall press,
And meet his smile with mute caress:—
And still as o'er life's path he goes
Plucks first the lily—then the rose.
And half forgets that e'er his heart

Owned for another sigh or smart ;
Or deems, while bound in passion's thrall
The last, the dearest loved of all—
But woman, even while she bows
Her veiled head to altar vows ;
Along life's slow and devious track,
For ever gazes fondly back.
And woman, even while her eye
Is turned to give its meek reply
To murmured words of praise,
Deep in her heart remembers, still
The tones that made her bosom thrill,
In unforgotten days.
Yea, even when on her lover's breast,
She sinks, and leaves her hand to rest
Within his clasping hold,
The sigh she gives is not so much
To prove the empire of that touch,

As for those days of old ;
 For long remembered hours, when first
 Love on her dawning senses burst—
 For all the wild impassioned truth
 That blest the visions of her youth !

And she, the lady of my lay,
 Through many a long and weary day,
 Had watched for him now far away. }
 For he to her was all in all,
 Her soul's first thought—her being's thrall—
 A light without which earth was dim,—
 (And well her love that young heart proved),
 But she alas had been to him,
One of the many bright things loved !

They flung her child in the fountain's wave—
 No ripple woke the bubbling breath,

The mother stretched no hand to save,
She knew thy power—relentless Death !
But with a wild and mournful stare,
She watched the bright hair's floating gleam,
Which 'mid the willow branches there,
Waved to and fro upon the stream.
And once she faintly spoke his name,
And on her heart her white hand pressed,
As though the lost word when it came,
Brought pain within her swelling breast.

Those brothers three, they turned away,
With hearts of steel and brows of gloom ;
Nor lifted up their swords to slay
Her who bewailed that infant's doom.
But *mothers* feel she could not live,
Tho' spared, to know that never more
The echoes to her ear should give

The silvery tones so loved of yore :
Those lisping tones whose meaning none
Could hear and understand, save one !

Oh ! darkly silent now that wood,
Where ring-doves made a pleasant moan,
And through its haunted solitude
The peasant will not roam alone ;—
For ever, by that fountain's side,
'Tis said a weeping lady stands,
A shaggy hound her only guide,
She wanders on and wrings her hands ;
And gazes from the snow white spray,
To the blue waters underneath,
Then turns her from the sight away
With wandering eye and gasping breath :—
'Tis she—who hid her murdered boy,
In the dark wood of Amesoy !

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